

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

News on the Internet: News Releases and related documents are posted at our website.
Go to: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

Contact:

Michael Drewniak, Public Information Officer
973-645-2888

hack0527.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 27, 2008

Former Orange Mayor and State Assemblyman
Mims Hackett Admits Taking \$5,000 Bribe

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

NEWARK – Former New Jersey Assemblyman and Orange Mayor Mims Hackett, Jr. pleaded guilty today to attempted extortion, admitting that he accepted a bribe from a cooperating witness who was representing an undercover insurance brokerage company in exchange for Hackett's official assistance in steering public contracts to the company, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Hackett, 67, pleaded guilty to Count One of the Indictment, charging attempted extortion under color of official right, before U.S. District Judge Jose L. Linares. Hackett is free on a \$200,000 bond pending his sentencing, which is scheduled for Sept. 15.

"It is an awful turn of events when people who hold multiple elective positions use all of the authority given to them to line their own pockets," said Christie. "Mr. Hackett's criminal conduct betrayed not only the people of the City of Orange but the people of the State of New Jersey."

Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Hackett faces a sentencing range of between 18 and 24 months in federal prison.

Hackett was arrested on Sept. 6, along with 10 other public officials and one private citizen as part of a public corruption investigation that progressed from southern to northern New Jersey. All but two of those 12 individuals have pleaded guilty or been convicted of taking bribes – including Passaic mayor Samuel Rivera, former Paterson Assemblyman Alfred Steele, Passaic Councilman Marcellus Jackson, and now Hackett.

Four members of the Pleasantville Board of Education in Atlantic County – where the public corruption investigation began before spreading north – have also pleaded guilty to taking bribes. The fifth board member charged, James T. McCormick, was convicted by a jury on March 19. Awaiting trial are former chief of staff to the Newark City Council President Keith O. Reid, and former Passaic City Council member Jonathan Soto. The one private individual, Louis Mister of Pleasantville, was convicted by a jury on May 14.

At his plea hearing, Hackett admitted that, on May 24, 2007, in his capacity as the mayor of Orange, he agreed to accept a \$5,000 cash payment in exchange for continuing to assist the undercover insurance brokerage company in attempting to obtain business with the City of Orange. Hackett also admitted that, on Aug. 14, 2007, he accepted the \$5,000 corrupt cash payment and stated that he would continue to support the company. Hackett acknowledged that the payment was in exchange for using his official influence in attempting to get the company insurance brokerage business with Orange.

The charge to which Hackett pleaded guilty carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, in determining an actual sentence, Judge Linares will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate

sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors, including acceptance of responsibility. The judge has discretion and is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all of that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, with the investigation leading to Hackett's guilty plea. He also credited prosecutors and investigators with the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Theodore F.L. Housel, for their assistance in the investigation.

This cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christopher J. Gramiccioni and Mark J. McCarren of the Office's Special Prosecutions Division in Newark, and David A. Bocian of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Trenton.

-end-

Hackett defense counsel: John A. Azzarello, Esq., Chatham