

NEWS

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Former Housing Rehabilitation Director in New Brunswick
Sentenced to 87 Months for Taking \$112,500 in Bribes

(More)

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NEWARK – The former director of housing rehabilitation for the City of New Brunswick was sentenced today to 87 months in federal prison today for extortion and tax evasion for accepting bribe payments and free home renovations from contractors in exchange for contracts, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

U.S. District Judge Harold A. Ackerman also ordered William Walker, 36, of Pennsauken, to pay \$112,500 in restitution to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, which subsidizes the New Brunswick housing program.

Judge Ackerman told Walker to surrender to the federal Bureau of Prisons by Feb. 12.

Walker pleaded guilty on April 30 and admitted that he accepted bribes from two contractors and failed to report the approximately \$112,500 in corrupt cash payments on his federal tax returns for tax years 2004, 2005 and 2006. He pleaded guilty to one count of extortion under color of official right and one count of tax evasion.

“Walker was at the top of a deeply corrupted housing rehabilitation program in New Brunswick,” said Marra. “He proved to be the most greedy among the corrupt public employees we prosecuted and received an appropriately long prison sentence.”

From 2002 to November 2006, Walker was the director of the Neighborhood Preservation Project for New Brunswick’s Department of Community Planning and Economic Development. Walker’s responsibilities included approving funding and contracts for the rehabilitation of substandard conditions in homes owned by qualified low-or-moderate-income owners within the City of New Brunswick.

Walker admitted at his plea hearing that between about January 2004 and September 2006, he had agreements with two construction and maintenance contractors doing business with the City of New Brunswick – Friendly Maintenance, based in Middlesex County, and Taj Maintenance, based in Perth Amboy.

Walker admitted that he accepted monthly cash payments of between \$1,000 and \$3,500 in exchange for his rewarding contracts to Friendly Maintenance valued at more than \$1.3 million.

Walker admitted that, with Taj Maintenance, he initially accepted cash payments of about 7 percent of the value of each rehabilitation contract he awarded the company. In 2006, he said he began accepting about \$2,000 per month from Taj Maintenance. In exchange for the corrupt payments, Walker admitted that Taj Maintenance received rehabilitation payments of more than \$900,000 from the City of New Brunswick.

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI’s Franklin Township Resident Agency, under

the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark; Special Agents of the HUD Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Renee Febles; and Special Agents of the IRS Criminal Investigation Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord, with the Middlesex County corruption investigation. The investigation also was assisted by investigators from the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Middlesex County Prosecutor Bruce J. Kaplan, and New Brunswick Police Department, under the direction of Police Chief Anthony Caputo.

The Walker case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brian R. Howe and Hope S. Olds of the U.S. Attorney's Special Prosecution's Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel:
Jeffrey M. Kolansky, Esq.