

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
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***Paul J. Fishman, U.S. Attorney***

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## Former Jersey City Sewer Permit Supervisor Sentenced to 24 Months in Prison for Attempted Extortion

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(More)

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NEWARK – A former supervisor of permits and connection fees for the Jersey City Municipal Utilities Authority was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison today for extorting corrupt cash payments from contractors, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton also ordered Angela Bellizzi, 53, of South River, to pay a \$7,500 fine and to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of her prison term. Judge Wigenton continued Bellizzi's release on a \$75,000 bond pending her surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, on a date to be determined by the prison authorities and the Court.

Bellizzi pleaded guilty before Judge Wigenton on Aug. 6, 2009, to a one-count criminal Information that charged her with attempted extortion. At her plea hearing, Bellizzi admitted accepting cash payments in exchange for her agreement to falsify and/or approve fraudulent sewer permit applications submitted by a government cooperating witness. The fraudulent permit applications for various properties made it appear that sewer connections would be for two-bedroom residences, as opposed to three-bedroom residences, which resulted in lower permit application fees.

Bellizzi admitted that she obtained the corrupt payments in exchange for falsifying permit applications, or for instructing the contractor on how to falsify permit applications that would be approved by her.

Bellizzi admitted that she told a cooperating witness who owned and/or renovated residential properties that, by fraudulently indicating on sewer connection application that it was for a two-bedroom versus three-bedroom residence, the cooperating witness was saving between approximately \$1,300 and \$1,500 per application.

Bellizzi admitted that on several occasions she took corrupt cash payments of between \$200 and \$500 from the cooperating witness for her role in generating or approving fraudulent applications. She also admitted that she told the cooperating witness that she normally charged other contractors \$300 for her similar action.

According to a stipulation in Bellizzi's plea agreement, the value of the benefit received by the cooperating witness and others who acted similarly with Bellizzi exceeded \$70,000 but was less than \$120,000. She agreed that her corrupt conduct occurred between at least January 2005 and June 2008.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Wigenton consulted 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.

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

Fishman credited the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Kevin B. Cruise, with the investigation. Fishman also credited the Jersey City Police Department Special Investigation Unit for their assistance.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jenny Kramer of the Office's Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Anthony Iacullo, Esq., Nutley.