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Former West New York Public Works Engineer Sentenced to Twelve Months in Prison for Taking Bribes from Contractors

(More)

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NEWARK – The former Project Coordinator and engineer for the West New York Department of Public Works was sentenced today to 12 months in federal prison for taking corrupt cash payments from contractors, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

U.S. District Judge Stanley R. Chesler also ordered Tommaso Calautti, 44, of New Milford, to pay \$21,000 in restitution to West New York and to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term. Judge Chesler continued the Calautti's release on a \$100,000 unsecured bond pending his surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on a date to be determined by prison authorities.

Calautti pleaded guilty before Judge Chesler on April 6, 2009 to one count of obstructing and attempting to obstruct interstate commerce by obtaining corrupt cash payments under color of official right.

At his plea hearing, Calautti admitted that he accepted a total of at least \$30,000 from three separate contractors who sought to do maintenance and repair work for the town of West New York. Calautti admitted he took the corrupt payments in exchange for exercising his official influence in favor of the contractors' companies.

Calautti was the Project Coordinator and engineer for the town West New York between May 2003 and July 2008. As part of Calautti's responsibilities, he reviewed certain bids submitted for municipal construction and maintenance projects; inspected the work performed under such bids; and determined whether the work performed satisfied the bid specifications.

In one case, Calautti ensured that a contractor was awarded bids to do sidewalk and paver repairs in West New York in exchange for corrupt payments totally approximately \$10,000, which he received in separate cash payments. From a second contractor, Calautti accepted \$1,000 in cash to expedite payment on an outstanding invoice of approximately \$29,000 for construction work done for the town. And finally, Calautti accepted and agreed to accept a total of approximately \$24,000 in separate cash payments from another contractor seeking to obtain the yearly maintenance and sidewalks contract with West New York.

Calautti admitted that between May 2003 and July 2008 he took at least \$30,000, but not more than \$70,000, in corrupt payments.

Fishman credited Special Agents with the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark, with the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Dustin Chao of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Miles Feinstein, Esq. Clifton