

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former Pleasantville School Board Member and City Councilman Sentenced to 15 Months in Prison for Attempted Extortion

(More)

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CAMDEN – Former Pleasantville Board of Education member and city councilman Maurice “Pete” Callaway was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison today for accepting bribes in return for his official assistance in steering board of education contracts, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

U.S. District Judge Jerome B. Simandle also ordered Callaway, 55, to pay a \$2,000 fine and to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison sentence. Judge Simandle continued Callaway’s release on a \$200,000 bond pending his surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, on a date to be determined by prison authorities.

Callaway pleaded guilty before Judge Simandle on Nov. 1, 2007, to a one-count criminal Information that charged him with attempted extortion under color of official right. As part of his plea, Callaway agreed to forfeit \$13,000, which he had received in corrupt payments.

Callaway was one of five members of the Pleasantville Board of Education (“PBOE”) arrested on Sept. 6, 2007, as part of a public corruption investigation that progressed from southern to northern New Jersey. Of the five members of the PBOE, all have either pleaded guilty or been convicted at trial. In addition, Louis Mister, 58, of Pleasantville, a private citizen who served as an intermediary for Callaway in accepting cash bribes, was convicted at trial. All have been sentenced to federal prison terms with the exception of Jayson G. Adams, who is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Simandle on May 1.

To date, the overall investigation has resulted in the convictions of twelve public officials on bribery-related charges.

At his plea hearing, Callaway admitted, that between May 2006 and September 2006, he accepted corrupt cash payments of \$10,000, \$1,500 and \$1,500 for using his official influence to steer PBOE roofing and insurance brokerage contracts. In each instance, Callaway utilized an intermediary to accept the payments.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Simandle granted the government’s motion for a downward departure from the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines based on the defendant’s cooperation with law enforcement authorities, which included providing testimony at the trials of two other defendants. Judge Simandle 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. The judge, however, has wide 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 that time.

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, for the investigation. He also credited Assistant 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.

The cases against Callaway and the other defendants are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David A. Bocian, Christopher J. Gramiccioni, Jenny Kramer-Hall and Hope S. Olds of the Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Katherine D. Hartman, Esq. Moorestown