

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 7, 2007

Businessman Admits Paying Bribes to Former Atlantic City Council President for Influence on City Contracts

(More)

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CAMDEN – An Atlantic City businessman pleaded guilty today to paying bribes to former Atlantic City Council President Craig Callaway, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Frank Barbera, 52, of Absecon, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler, to a one-count Information, which charges him with giving corrupt payments totaling \$5,000 to former Atlantic City Council President Craig Callaway. Judge Kugler continued Barbera's release on a \$50,000 unsecured appearance bond with G.P.S. monitoring pending sentencing, which is scheduled for Feb. 14. Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Barbera faces a probable range of between 18 and 24 months in federal prison.

At his plea hearing, Barbera admitted bribing Callaway in exchange for preferential treatment on business opportunities. Barbera admitted that in 2005 he was employed as a real estate agent and businessman and, as such, he represented developers interested in developing various parcels of land, including land owned or controlled by Atlantic City.

Barbera admitted that between March 2005 and July 2005 he made four corrupt cash payments totaling \$5,000 to Callaway for the purpose of influencing him in his official capacity in connection with various development projects, including the former Bader Field airport site. Barbera admitted that he personally handed the cash payments directly to Callaway.

The charge to which Barbera pleaded guilty carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of 10 years and a fine of \$250,000. However, in determining an actual sentence, Judge Kugler 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. The judge, however, 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.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, in Newark, with the investigations of Atlantic City corruption.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas J. Eicher and Judith H. Germano, both of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense Counsel: Carl D. Poplar, Esq. Turnersville