

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
NOVEMBER 29, 2011  
[www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyw](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyw)

CONTACT: BARBARA BURNS  
PHONE: (716) 843-5817  
FAX: (716) 551-3051

## **FORMER HEAD OF CITY AGENCY PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING FEDERAL FUNDS**

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Timothy Wanamaker, 47, former head of a City agency responsible for overseeing the revitalization of Buffalo, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara to theft from programs receiving Federal funds. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul J. Campana, who is handling the case, stated that the defendant served as Executive Director of the City of Buffalo's Office of Strategic Planning from 2004 until 2008. In this capacity, Wanamaker supervised both the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation (BERC), of which the defendant also held the title of President, and the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency. BERC – a recently disbanded City agency – at the time was responsible for promoting economic development with funds obtained from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Wanamaker admitted that while serving as BERC President, he improperly used a credit card provided to him by BERC for official business, for a wide range of non-work related expenses. Specifically, Wanamaker admitted using the credit card to pay for such personal expenses as lodging, car rentals, entertainment, and other costs accrued by his family and guests. The costs arose during trips to such locations as San Francisco, Las Vegas, Washington, D.C., and Miami, Florida. Wannamaker and the Government estimated that the money misappropriated by the defendant amounted to approximately \$30,000.

HUD provides millions of dollars annually to the City of Buffalo to assist the City's economic development and neighborhood revitalization efforts, and federal law requires HUD funded agencies such as BERC to spend money in accordance with their mission.

“In this case, the defendant admitted stealing federal funds which had been intended for economic development in Buffalo,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “Given that the City has one of the highest poverty rates in the country, every dollar taken from these development funds was a particularly damaging blow. Our Office will faithfully protect federal funds intended to assist local communities, and will vigorously prosecute any official who breaches the public trust in this manner,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul.

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation will utilize each and every tool available at its disposal to root out public corruption at all levels of government," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota. "The City of Buffalo can ill-afford the illegal diversion of federal funds earmarked for the economic growth of our region. Today's plea was the result of a collaborative effort by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Inspector General, and the United States Attorney's Office."

The plea is the culmination of an investigation by Special Agents of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Steven Perez, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent In Charge Christopher M. Piehota.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 16, 2012 at 12:30 p.m. before Judge Arcara. Wanamaker was released pending sentencing.