



*United States Attorney
District of New Jersey*

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**FORMER PLEASANTVILLE, NEW JERSEY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER
PLEADS GUILTY TO EXTORTION CONSPIRACY**

CAMDEN, N.J. – Former Pleasantville, New Jersey Board of Education (PBOE) member David Thomas pleaded guilty today to conspiring to commit extortion, admitting that he served as an intermediary by accepting \$23,700 in corrupt payments for former PBOE members Jayson G. Adams and Maurice “Pete” Callaway, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

David Thomas, 33, of Pleasantville, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Joseph E. Irenas to an Information charging him with conspiring to commit extortion under color of official right. Thomas is free on a \$50,000 bond pending his sentencing, which is scheduled for September 21, 2010.

At today’s hearing, Thomas admitted that from May to November 2006, he facilitated the payments of bribes from a government cooperating witness (CW) to Adams and Callaway. Specifically, Thomas admitted that he used a dormant contracting company he owned to conceal bribe payments that were made to Adams, Callaway, and others. Thomas accepted several checks from Adams that Adams had been given by the CW, totaling approximately \$23,700. Thomas deposited the checks, which were made payable to the company, into the company’s bank account and then provided cash payments of equal value to Adams, who then made cash payments to Callaway. Thomas admitted that he knew the payments were made in order to obtain Adams and Callaway’s official assistance, action and influence in matters pertaining to their positions on the PBOE.

The case against Thomas stemmed from a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) public corruption investigation that progressed from southern to northern New Jersey. On September 6, 2007, 11 public officials – including Adams and Callaway – were arrested in connection with this investigation. All of these individuals have pleaded guilty or been convicted at trial. Both Callaway and Adams pleaded guilty to attempted extortion under color of official right and were sentenced by United States District Judge Jerome B. Simandle to 15 and 30 months in prison, respectively.

The charge to which Thomas pleaded guilty carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Irenas will consult the advisory United States 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.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, for the investigation involving Thomas. He also credited 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 government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Gramiccioni of the United States Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense counsel: James J. Leonard Jr., Esq, Atlantic City, N.J.