

PRESS RELEASE

Former Jersey City Board of Education President and Former Acting Executive Director of Jersey City Employment and Training Program Admits Embezzlement and Fraud

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey

NEWARK, N.J. – The former president of the Jersey City Board of Education (JCBOED) and former acting executive director of the Jersey City Employment and Training Program (JCETP) today admitted embezzling JCETP funds and committing wire fraud in connection with his use of funds from his 2016 JCBOED campaign account, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced.

Sudhan M. Thomas, 47, of Jersey City, New Jersey, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William J. Martini to two counts of an indictment charging him with embezzling funds from JCETP, an organization that received federal funds, and wire fraud for embezzling money from his 2016 JCBOED campaign.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Thomas served as JCETP's acting executive director from January 2019 until his resignation in July 2019. JCETP was a nonprofit organization that operated to assist Jersey City residents to prepare for and enter the workforce. JCETP received substantial amounts of funding from federal grants from the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Using his access to JCETP funds and control of JCETP's bank accounts, from March 2019 through July 2019, Thomas embezzled more than \$45,000 from JCETP. Thomas caused checks to be drawn from JCETP accounts that were made payable to others, but ultimately received by Thomas or used to pay his debts and expenses. Thomas embezzled JCETP funds by issuing JCETP checks made out to cash that Thomas either cashed himself or used to obtain bank checks that he made payable to Next Global, an entity for which Thomas was a director, which were deposited into a bank account for his personal use.

Thomas ran for and was elected to a seat on the JCBOED in 2016, ultimately serving as vice president and then president of the JCBOED. From September 2016 to November 2016, Thomas collected campaign contributions and caused them to be deposited into a bank account opened for the 2016 campaign that he controlled. Under the guise of collecting repayments for loans to the campaign or reimbursement for other purported campaign-related expenses, Thomas embezzled more than \$8,000 from his 2016 campaign for his own personal use.

The embezzlement charge is punishable by a maximum potential penalty of 10 years in prison. The wire fraud charge is punishable by a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison. Both charges carry a maximum fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 1, 2023.

Thomas originally was charged by indictment in November 2020 with Paul Appel, 81, of Point Pleasant, New Jersey, who is an attorney and who also served as treasurer for Thomas' 2016 campaign. Appel's case is pending before Judge Martini, and he is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents with the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy in Newark, and special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, New York Region, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone, with the investigation leading to today's guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Elaine K. Lou, Chief of the Opioid Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Unit of the Criminal Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Katherine J. Calle of the Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

[thomasappel.indictment.pdf](#) (1.11 MB)

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