

Retirees' \$500G health bill

Audit: Glen Cove paid premiums for six ineligible city employees

BY RACHEL UDA
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Glen Cove has paid more than \$500,000 in health insurance costs for six retirees who aren't eligible for coverage, a recent audit found.

The report by Manhattan-based Marks Paneth Accountants & Advisors analyzed the employment files of 191 retired city employees receiving New York State Health Insurance Program benefits.

The city paid \$490,834 in premium payments for the ineligible retirees, including two former city attorneys and a former councilman, according to a report by the city controller based on the audit. The city also issued \$125,697 in Medicare Part B reimbursements to the former employees from 2007 to 2018. Glen Cove, as a



Glen Cove Mayor Timothy Tenke

state health insurance program member, is required to reimburse enrollees and their dependents for the cost of Medicare Part B premiums.

The audit and the report by controller Sandra Clarkson were circulated in February to the mayor, city council and city attorney.

"None of the people accepting health care benefits were doing anything dishonest or fraudulent," Mayor Timothy Tenke said in a statement. "They were advised by the city that they were entitled to these

benefits, which have been provided to them willingly throughout their retirement."

The duration of the coverage for each of the men varies based on when they retired.

Tenke said the city council is working on resolutions "to address some of the issues that gave rise to where we are today." He said those measures were likely to be introduced at the next council meeting, but he declined to provide details or comment further.

The city may be reimbursed by the state health insurance program for six months of the incorrectly paid premiums, totaling \$28,693, Clarkson wrote in her report.

Tenke said the city will likely cover the former employees' health insurance payments until the end of the month.

Clarkson recommended the unqualified retirees be removed from the health insurance plan and that the city submit documents to the state to try to recover the six months of premiums. She also suggested consulting attorneys "to recover any premium payments beyond six months," the report reads.

According to the audit, three retirees don't meet the minimum requirement of having five years of service to receive health benefits. Leonard Baron, a provisional building department administrator, worked 2.6 years for the city before retiring in 2008. Anthony Maurino, a building department administrator, worked 4.8 years and retired in 2000. Francis Deegan, a city attorney under former mayor and current Rep. Thomas Suozzi, worked 4.1 years and left the position in 1998.

The city has paid \$184,000 in premium payments to cover Deegan and a dependent, according to Clarkson's report.

Gilbert Gallego, who worked six years in public information and retired in 1973, didn't meet the minimum requirements of working at least 20 hours a week, making at least \$2,000 a year, or being elected to serve,

according to the audit report.

Former employees Anthony Jimenez and Vincent Taranto don't qualify because of a resolution passed in 2011 that suspended health benefits for city council members, the city attorney and the city historian, according to the report. The city paid \$43,000 in premiums for Jimenez, a city councilman for 14 years who lost his re-election bid in 2014; and \$55,000 in premiums for Taranto, a city attorney for seven years who also served until 2014.

Jimenez declined to comment. The five other retirees could not be reached or did not return a request for comment.

The auditors reported they couldn't determine the eligibility of some other retirees because they didn't respond to a letter the firm sent requesting supporting documentation.

Freeport janitor admits to selling heroin

BY BRIDGET MURPHY
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A Freeport man who prosecutors said did drug deals from his janitorial job at the Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County as part of a narcotics ring with California ties has admitted selling heroin.

Darrell Boyd, 51, pleaded guilty Friday in Nassau County Court to criminal sale of a controlled substance, court records show.

Under a plea bargain, Acting State Supreme Court Justice William O'Brien committed to giving Boyd three years in prison at his June sentencing, said Boyd's attorney, David Haber.

Nassau District Attorney Madeline Singas said at a March news conference that Boyd and 13 others were part of an "unusually brazen" operation that included the sale of drugs from the office of the Roosevelt non-profit during business hours.

The nonprofit, which didn't return a call Tuesday seeking comment, wasn't aware of Boyd's drug sales on its property, the

district attorney has said.

Singas spokeswoman Miriam Sholder said in a statement Tuesday that "50,000 doses of heroin and other dangerous drugs were taken off Nassau's streets by this operation," and that prosecutors had recommended eight years in prison for Boyd.

Authorities said investigators seized narcotics with a combined street value of about \$600,000 to \$700,000 as part of the overall bust, saying the indictments of the 14 defendants followed a yearlong probe in which investigators also found 2 pounds of marijuana, about 6.8 ounces of cocaine, a gun and about \$220,000 in cash.

Boyd, also known as "Fab," had been facing to 12½ to 25 years behind bars if convicted of the top count at trial, prosecutors said previously.

They alleged Boyd sold drugs he acquired from his suppliers on consignment, paying back the dealers after selling the product.

"The fact that we were able to evaluate evidence early, shortly after the indictment,

helped reach a resolution early," Haber said Tuesday of the case against his client.

Court records show charges remain pending against other defendants in the ring, including Tony McClam, 49, of Roosevelt. Prosecutors say McClam, who has pleaded not guilty, was one of the biggest suppliers and shipped drugs from California.

Investigators in Orange County, California, seized about \$300,000 worth of cocaine, which McClam had arranged for shipment to Long Island, according to Singas' office.

Prosecutors also said authorities seized uncut heroin that could have been made into 40,000 doses for sale on the street from the home of McClam — whom a Nassau jury convicted of separate drug felonies at a March trial.

At the time of the bust, prosecutors said they were investigating whether toxicology tests connected the November overdose death of a 62-year-old man in Freeport to the ring. They declined to comment Tuesday.

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