



October 10, 2024

East Cleveland Mayor Brandon King Indicted on Theft in Office, Having an Unlawful Interest in a Public Contract Among Other Charges; Former East Cleveland City Councilman Ernest Smith Also Indicted

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that a Cuyahoga County grand jury has returned an indictment charging Brandon King, 56, with Theft in Office, Having an Unlawful Interest in a Public Contract, additional charges, and criminal ethics violations. Former East Cleveland City Councilman Ernest Smith, 49, was also indicted.

"Mayor Brandon King demonstrated a complete disregard and disdain for the rule of law," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "The citizens of East Cleveland deserve better. The investigation continues."

From January 1, 2019, through October 2, 2024, Brandon King authorized a public contract and payments through the City of East Cleveland to businesses owned by King and his family members. King authorized leasing office space in a building on Euclid Avenue, owned by King Management Group Limited, to the City of East Cleveland's Domestic Violence Department. The lease was for \$14,184.21 annually, paid in quarterly installments.

From March 16, 2019, through February 22, 2022, the City of East Cleveland purchased \$5,803.17 of cleaning supplies from American Merchandising Services. King Management Group Ltd. and American Merchandising Services are owned by Brandon King and his family members.

From January 1, 2018, through March 31, 2022, Brandon King improperly provided a City of East Cleveland vehicle to East Cleveland City Councilman Ernest Smith. King also provided Smith with City of East Cleveland gas cards to purchase vehicle fuel. While Smith had the vehicle, he used two gas cards to purchase \$6,791 of gas at the expense of the City of East Cleveland.

The investigation is being conducted by the Ohio Auditor of State and the Ohio Ethics Commission and remains ongoing.

Under Ohio Revised Code General Provisions Section 3.16, "Suspension of local official charged with felony relating to official conduct," the State of Ohio will be filing with the Ohio Supreme Court to have Brandon King suspended from office during the pendency of the case.

On October 10, 2024, Brandon King was indicted on the following charges:

- **Two counts of Theft in Office (F4)**
- **Four counts of Having an Unlawful Interest in a Public Contract (F4 x 2, M1 x 2)**
- **Four counts of Representation by Public Official or Employee (M1)**



- **One count of Filing a False Disclosure Statement (M1)**
- **One count of Soliciting Improper Compensation (M1)**

On October 10, 2024, Ernest Smith was indicted on the following charges:

- **One count of Theft in Office (F4)**
- **Two counts of Theft (F5)**
- **One count of Soliciting Improper Compensation (M1)**
- **One count of Misuse of Credit Cards (M1)**

If convicted of Soliciting Improper Compensation, the statute requires a 7-year disqualification from holding any public office, employment, or position of trust in Ohio.

You can view the indictment [here](#).

They will be arraigned at the Cuyahoga County Justice Center on a later date.