



NJ Mayor Cops To Using Town Employees to Run Private Biz

By [George Woolston](#) · [Listen to article](#)

Law360 (January 10, 2025, 4:15 PM EST) -- A longtime New Jersey mayor is barred from ever holding public office or employment again after he admitted Friday to using township employees to help run a private business out of his mayoral office, [New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin](#) announced.

Salvatore Bonaccorso, who has served as mayor of Clark Township since 2001, pleaded guilty to third-degree conspiring to commit official misconduct and forgery before Union County Superior Court Judge Lisa Miralles Walsh. As part of his plea deal, Bonaccorso, 64, entered a consent order immediately giving up his title as mayor and agreeing to be permanently barred from holding any future public office or employment.

In addition to using township resources to run his personal business, Bonaccorso used an engineer's name and license number and forged the engineer's signature on permit applications submitted to municipalities for tank removals, according to investigators.

The mayor and his landscaping and underground oil tank removal company, Bonaccorso & Son LLC, also agreed to be barred from conducting any business with the state or its political subdivisions for five years. The company is also barred for three years from conducting, or contracting to conduct, any storage tank removals for any private commercial or residential property owners, the attorney general said.

"Today's guilty plea secured by [the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability] ends a long and sad betrayal of the community by someone who had been in a position of power and trust for a long time," Platkin said in a statement. "Anyone who betrays the public's trust by placing their own interests ahead of their duty as a public servant to New Jersey residents will be held accountable. Let me be clear: I will never stop rooting out corruption in New

Jersey, no matter how powerful the offenders may be."

In a statement Friday, Bonaccorso's attorneys said that township staff was used only to send faxes or emails related to his business and that the engineer had agreed that the engineer's license would be used to apply for these permits and was paid for the use of his name.

"Today, to avoid further disruption and stress to his family, to his health and to the town he loves and has dedicated his life to, Mayor Bonaccorso has pled rather than exercising his right to a trial. As part of the plea, the mayor has agreed to forfeit public office but knows that his administration's policies and practices will continue to benefit the citizens of Clark," his attorneys Robert G. Stahl and Andrew C. Olesnycky of [Stahl Gasiorowski Criminal Defense Lawyers PC](#) said in a joint statement.

Bonaccorso was [charged](#) in November 2023 after an investigation revealed that he was operating his oil tank-removal business out of his township office. According to prosecutors, Bonaccorso stored and maintained the records for the business at the mayor's office, used township equipment including computers and fax machines, and directed or used township employees to perform duties for the business while on the clock for the township.

The investigation also revealed Bonaccorso used and forged an engineer's signature on permit applications for tank removals, knowing the engineer was not involved in the projects in any way and without any legally required tank inspections taking place at the removal sites, prosecutors said.

According to prosecutors, Bonaccorso misrepresented to municipalities that the engineer was the on-site supervisor of the removal work for all the tank removals done by his company. New Jersey law prohibits any individual from doing work on unregulated heating-oil tank systems unless the individual is certified or working under the immediate, on-site supervision of a person who is certified, prosecutors said.

The value of the removal jobs associated with the fraudulent permits submitted by Bonaccorso between 2017 and 2023 amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars, prosecutors said.

Bonaccorso faces three years of probation and a fine of \$15,000 under his plea agreement.

The investigation into Bonaccorso and subsequent charges stem from an investigation into misconduct allegations related to the township's police department, Platkin said when the charges were announced in 2023.

While the investigation of the police department did not result in criminal charges, Platkin released a 43-page report that found the use of racist, sexist and antisemitic slurs when township officials, including Bonaccorso, Clark Police Chief Pedro Matos and Sgt. Joseph Teston, who ran the internal affairs unit, discussed hiring practices and police actions.

The state is represented by Jeffrey J. Manis and Frank L. Valdinoto of the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General.

Bonaccorso is represented by Robert G. Stahl and Andrew C. Olesnycky of Stahl Gasiorowski Criminal Defense Lawyers PC.

The case is State of New Jersey v. Salvatore F. Bonaccorso, case number not immediately available, in the [Superior Court of New Jersey](#), County of Union.

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