

Housing Society officer admits taking bribes over building renovation contracts

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Two staff members of the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS), who were arrested by the ICAC in an operation earlier this month, were today (Friday) charged with bribery in relation to renovation contracts of three private residential buildings in Yuen Long.

Chu Ka-hang, 28, Senior Officer of HKHS, and Jimmy Ying Jim-ming, 43, Assistant Manager of HKHS, appeared in Tuen Mun Magistracy on a total of four bribery offences.

Chu faced two counts of public servant accepting an advantage and one of public servant soliciting an advantage, contrary to 4(2)(a) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (POBO).

Chu and Ying were jointly charged with one count of public servants accepting an advantage, contrary to Section 4(2)(a) of POBO.

Chu pleaded guilty to all charges against him, while Ying denied the charge. Magistrate Mr Kwok Wai-kin adjourned the case until June 6 this year for mention.

The court heard that at the time of the offences, Chu was a Senior Officer of the Yuen Long Office of the Property Management Advisory Centre (PMAC) of the HKHS.

As officers of PMAC, Chu and another staff member were responsible for encouraging flat owners to take part in the Building Management Incentive Scheme of HKHS, which subsidises flat owners to carry out repair works of the common areas of their buildings.

The officers also offered guidance to flat owners or incorporated owners in the procurement and tendering of repair and maintenance works.

The court heard that the incorporated owners (IO) of three private residential buildings in Yuen Long applied to HKHS for subsidies for renovation.

In mid 2006, Chu and the other staff member of HKHS reached an agreement to corruptly assist consultancy firms and renovation contractors in securing consultancy and renovation contracts of the buildings under their charter. They agreed to equally share the corrupt proceeds.

With the assistance of Chu and the other staff member of HKHS, the IO of Kwan Wah Building (KWB) invited tenders for a consultancy contract of the building.

The court was told that a former colleague of Chu had sought his assistance in securing a \$1.4 million renovation contract of KWB for a construction company and offered him a reward equivalent to 3% of the contract value.

On February 5 this year, the construction company's director met Chu's former colleague. Later the same day, Chu's former colleague met Chu in a public toilet in Yuen Long, and handed over about \$10,000 to him on behalf of the company director.

On April 1 this year, Chu's former colleague gave \$13,000 bribe money to Chu at a shopping centre in Kowloon Tong. The duo were arrested by ICAC officers after the transaction, with the bribe money recovered from Chu.

The court heard that Chu also accepted \$20,000 from his former colleague and the company director in 2007 for assisting the company to obtain a \$2.6 million renovation contract of Fook Shun Building, another building in Yuen Long.

Chu had solicited from the two persons about \$40,000 in March this year for assisting the same company in obtaining a renovation contract worth over \$4 million of a third residential building in Yuen Long - Ho Fat Building.

Chu and Ying were granted court bail with terms not to leave Hong Kong and to report to the police once a week. The court also ordered Ying not to interfere with prosecution witnesses.

The prosecution was today represented by ICAC officer Patrick So.