

Former director gets prison time for embezzling from Spotsylvania-based affordable housing coalition

Keith Epps

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A judge on Wednesday imposed the 4 1/2-year prison sentence a jury recommended in May to the former executive director of a Spotsylvania County-based affordable housing group.

Connie Jones, 52, of Spotsylvania, also known as Connie Inez Risher, was previously convicted of three felony counts of embezzlement for stealing thousands of dollars from the organization. She has been in jail since May.

The evidence presented by prosecutor Jeff Adams showed that Jones had 11 prior theft-related convictions when she assumed her position with the Central Virginia Housing Coalition in 2015. Adams said it is his understanding that the organization has put better safeguards in place in light of Jones' actions.

The prosecution's evidence showed that in 2015 and 2016, Jones funneled CVHC money to three different family members. She was ordered Wednesday by Judge Ricardo Rigual to make restitution totaling about \$36,000.

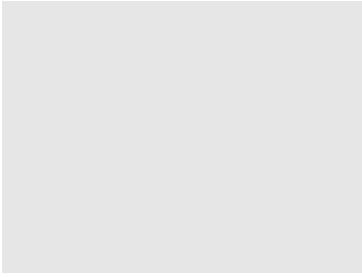
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A Virginia State Police investigation showed that CVHC funds were used to pay for apartments rented by Jones' husband in Blacksburg and her daughter in Richmond. Police said money was also sent to a relative in South Carolina, though it remains unclear what the woman's real name is and how she is related to Jones.

Adams said Jones also created fake invoices and wrote phony letters from others in an effort to cover her tracks.

Adams successfully opposed efforts to have Jones' sentence reduced Wednesday. "She requested the jury and there is no reason to deviate from what the jury decided," Adams said.



Jones

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