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## **A litany of charges handed down in Bell**

Tuesday's arrests of eight current and former City Council members and administrators are the latest moves in a series of investigations by local and state law enforcement officials.

September 22, 2010

Three local and state law enforcement agencies have taken action against the city of Bell and its elected leaders and administrators. Their investigations have led to tax rollbacks, a lawsuit from the state attorney general to recover improper loans and bloated salaries, and — in the most dramatic step yet — the filing of dozens of felony charges against four of the five council members, two former council members and two former administrators.

Here's a look at the steps taken by the agencies so far:

### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY DIST. ATTY. STEVE COOLEY**

- **Former City Manager Robert Rizzo**, 56, arrested on 53 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds, conflict of interest and falsification of documents, including allegations that he wrote his employment contract without council approval. Of those counts, 44 involve the alleged misappropriation of more than \$2.5 million in public funds, including awarding \$1.9 million in unauthorized loans to himself, city employees and two council members. His bail is set at \$3.2 million.
- **Former Assistant City Manager Angela Spaccia**, 52, arrested on four felony counts involving misappropriation of more than \$1.3 million in public funds, including taking more than \$230,000 in illegal loans from the city. Her bail is set at \$377,500.
- **Mayor Oscar Hernandez**, 63, arrested on 21 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds, mostly related to alleged fake meetings of city boards that inflated council members' pay to nearly \$8,000 a month between January 2006 and July 2010. Hernandez allegedly misappropriated \$262,848. One of the felony counts relates to \$20,000 he received from the city, a loan approved by Rizzo. His bail is set at \$285,000.
- **Councilwoman Teresa Jacobo**, 52, arrested on 20 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds related to alleged fake meetings of city boards. Jacobo allegedly misappropriated \$262,848. Her bail is set at \$260,000.
- **Councilman George Mirabal**, 61, arrested on 20 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds related to alleged fake meetings of city boards. Mirabal allegedly misappropriated \$262,848. His bail is set at \$260,000.

- **Councilman Luis Artiga**, 49, arrested on 13 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds related to alleged fake meetings of city boards. Artiga allegedly misappropriated \$129,272 and obtained a \$20,000 loan from the city. His bail is set at \$145,000.

- **Former Councilman Victor Bello**, 51, arrested on 16 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds related to alleged fake meetings of city boards. Bello allegedly misappropriated \$193,563. His bail is set at \$190,000.

- **Former Councilman George Cole**, 60, arrested on 12 felony counts of misappropriation of public funds related to alleged fake meetings of city boards. Cole allegedly misappropriated \$133,576. His bail is set at \$130,000.

#### **STATE ATTY. GEN. JERRY BROWN**

- Rizzo, Spaccia, Hernandez, Jacobo, Mirabal, Bello, Cole and former Police Chief Randy Adams are named in a lawsuit Brown filed Sept. 15, accusing them of secretly plotting to enrich themselves and conceal their lucrative compensation.

- Artiga agreed to cooperate with authorities and is not named in the lawsuit, which seeks to recoup money from excessive salaries and illegal loans.

- Adams, the former police chief of Glendale who earned \$450,000 a year in Bell, is not charged with a crime.

- The attorney general's lawsuit cites an e-mail from Spaccia to Adams in which she wrote: "We have crafted our agreements carefully so we do not draw attention to our pay. The word Pay Period is used and not defined in order to protect you from someone taking the time to add up your pay."

- The suit seeks to require the officials to make restitution for excessive compensation, as well as limit their retirements, which are based on salaries. It also asks a judge to order that the council members, Rizzo and Spaccia be barred from public office for life. It also asks a judge to appoint a receiver to run the city.

#### **STATE CONTROLLER JOHN CHIANG**

- Concluded that Bell leaders illegally raised city business taxes by more than 50% over the last decade. Chiang estimated that more than 1,000 businesses were affected and that more than \$2.1 million was collected illegally.

- Concluded that city leaders illegally raised a "retirement tax" to fund pensions, costing taxpayers \$2.9 million.

- Concluded that city leaders assessed improper sewer fees of more than \$600,000.

- Bell's interim city administrators are working with Chiang on a relief plan to pay back taxes and roll back the illegal fees.
- Chiang said, in all, Bell city officials levied \$5.6 million in improper taxes and fees on residents and businesses, more than one third of the city's \$13.5-million general fund.