

Brunswick City Commissioner James H. Brooks denied bail in bribery case

Brooks will remain in jail at least 11 more days on a bribery charge.

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James H. Brooks, a Brunswick city commissioner, is charged with bribery.

By [Terry Dickson](#)

WOODBINE - Brunswick City Commissioner James H. Brooks will remain in the Camden County jail at least 11 more days after a magistrate denied bail on his bribery charge Monday.

Saying Brooks could pose a risk to residents in Camden and Glynn counties, Magistrate Jennifer E. Lewis refused to release him on bail but set a preliminary hearing for 10 a.m., Feb. 10.

Lewis issued her ruling after a half-hour hearing in which Brooks sat shackled before her in striped jail clothing. Near the end of the hearing, District Attorney Jackie Johnson said there is more to come than the single bribery charge in which Brooks is accused of taking \$300 to have a drug conviction removed from the record of a man who wants to be a police officer.

Johnson described the investigation as a probe into an “ongoing criminal enterprise that’s been going on for a long time.”

Brooks’ lawyer, Alan David Tucker of Brunswick, said Brooks would have to be a mind reader to know who the witnesses are and that he would have to assume it is every city employee and try to influence them all.

“Of course, he doesn’t know who the witnesses are,” Johnson said later. “There are many.”

They have witnessed acts of bribery and instances when Brooks had tried to influence the workings of city government, Johnson said.

The court didn’t ask Johnson to elaborate, and she declined to do so when asked by the Times-Union.

The Rev. Kenneth Akins, pastor of Greater Dimensions Christian Fellowship in Brunswick, said Brooks is an associate pastor there and described him as a friend and confidant.

“I believe he’ll do whatever the court tells him to do,” Akins said.

It became clear that Johnson didn’t stop with checks into Brooks’ background when, in responding to her questions, Akins acknowledged that he, like Brooks, is a convicted felon. Akins also said he still owes his former church, First Jordan Grove Baptist Church, \$10,000 for spending church funds on trying to secure a daycare center.

Brooks’ wife, Alicia, said their two children, 4 and 12, need him at home.

“He’s a good man. He’s a good father and a good husband,” she said.

Alicia Brooks said she was shocked when her husband was arrested Thursday afternoon in Brunswick and said there are problems at home.

Their roof leaks badly, her car has been at a repair garage seven months because she can’t afford to get it out and her house has no hot water. Their children have to heat water on the stove to bathe, she said.

She did not say how the release of her husband would improve any of the conditions that have continued for months.

When Johnson questioned her, Alicia Brooks said that Brooks’ brother had returned the Glock pistol that her husband carried before his arrest. She also said that he carried a police radio and often wore his city commissioner’s badge.

Tucker told Lewis he wants a hearing because Georgia law says a public official can’t be charged with bribery for taking money to do something outside the power of his office.

“I’ve been advised as soon as he’s released today they’re going to go up and arrest him in Glynn County,” Tucker said.

But Brooks was not released as neither side got all it wanted.

Johnson wanted Brooks held for 30 days so investigators could “seal up” all the state’s witnesses, and Tucker wanted him released Monday.

Brooks had about a dozen supporters in the courtroom who said they wanted Brooks released. Among them was Nahunta Mayor Robert L. Thomas who was upset at Lewis' actions.

"This man is not a threat to nobody," Thomas said.

Tucker said it was ludicrous to think Brooks was a flight risk on the sole bribery charge.

"Are you going to leave your family and friends for a case that's going to be thrown out?" he asked.

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