

Judge Orders Status Conference After Lawyers For White, Hendricks Fail to Respond to Prosecution Inquiries

With the fraud trial set for next month, prosecutors sought court intervention after defense attorneys failed to confirm if they would request a delay. Judge Mark Kearney granted the request and admonished the defense for not responding timely

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Former Dept. of Sports, Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Calvert White.

On Friday, government lawyers filed a motion requesting that the court schedule a status conference for the trial against Calvert White and Benjamin Hendricks on fraud charges, currently set to begin next month.

Prosecutors say that after several failed attempts to ascertain whether defense attorneys will in fact seek to delay the start of the trial, the court's intervention has become necessary.

At a January 23 status hearing, prosecutors say, counsel for Mr. Hendricks indicated that a continuance of the trial would be needed. The VIDOJ reached out some days to confirm whether this would indeed be the case. There was no response from either Darren John-Baptiste, representing Mr. Hendricks, or Clive Rivers, representing Mr. White.

The court denied an initial request for a status conference, instead asking the parties to meet and confer amongst themselves about whether or not the trial should be pushed back. That meeting, held on February 11, reportedly ended with a promise from both defense attorneys to confer with their clients and provide a firm response by February 13.

When that response failed to materialize, the government made a second request for the court to convene a status conference to force an answer from the defense on whether they are prepared to go to trial next month. Judge Mark Kearney granted the motion, scheduling a status conference at 1 p.m. Tuesday.

Before the attorneys meet with Judge Kearney, however, they must meet no later than 11 a.m. Tuesday morning to confer amongst themselves. In his order setting up today's schedule, the judge chastised attorneys Rivers and Jean-Baptiste for their lack of timely response to inquiries from opposing counsel, "contrary to what is expected of members of this Bar."