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**Attorney General Steve Marshall, FBI Announce Sentencing of Former Birmingham Water Works Chairwoman Sherry Lewis**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall and the FBI Special Agent in Charge Johnnie Sharp today announced the sentencing of former Birmingham Water Works Board Chairwoman Sherry Lewis for two felony ethics-law convictions.

Jefferson County Circuit Judge Clyde Jones sentenced Lewis under Alabama’s split-sentence law to a ten-year sentence of imprisonment for both counts, to run concurrently, with a “reverse split” of two years in prison. In addition, Jones ordered Lewis to pay a fine of \$15,000 for each count, for a total of \$30,000, and further ordered Lewis to complete a total of 400 hours of community service for charities or agencies that feed the elderly and homeless. Under a reverse-split sentence, the term of imprisonment is not imposed until the end of the sentence, and the period of imprisonment could possibly be suspended if the defendant satisfies all other terms and conditions of her sentence.

Lewis was convicted in October, following a one-and-one-half week trial, of having used her position as a director of the Birmingham Water Works Board to obtain personal gain for herself and her family, as well as having voted and participated in matters before the Board involving issues about which she had a financial interest or gain. The jury’s verdict was based on five days of testimony and hundreds of exhibits proving Lewis obtained three jobs for her son, tickets to the 2015 Cotton Bowl, trips and travel expenses, and extravagant meals from Jerry Jones, a contractor performing work for the Board of Directors of the Birmingham Water Works. After trial, Judge Jones ordered that Lewis be held in the Jefferson County Jail pending a pre-sentence investigation and sentencing.

Evidence at trial revealed that much of the personal gain obtained by Lewis came in the form of extravagant meals, including \$60 cocktails, paid for by a contractor working for the Board of Directors of the Birmingham Water Works. The State’s request that Lewis be required to perform a specific type of community service, focused on charities or agencies that feed the elderly, needy, and disadvantaged, was a direct response to this evidence.

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“As first-vice chairperson of the Birmingham Water Works Board, Sherry Lewis advocated on behalf of, and voted for, compensation to pay a contractor three times their actual labor costs at the same time she was enjoying \$63 a-la-carte steaks, \$50 shellfish appetizers, and \$70 bottles of wine bought for her by that contractor,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Such abuse of public office is unacceptable. It is appropriate that she has been called to account and is being punished for this crime.”

Attorney General Marshall also reiterated his deep appreciation for the assistance of the FBI in the prosecution of Lewis.

FBI Birmingham Special Agent in Charge Johnnie Sharp, Jr., said, "Lewis not only betrayed her community, but violated the law, and all in an effort to serve her own personal interests. Public officials entrusted to perform public service should do so legitimately and in the best interest of the community they represent. If not, they should expect the same outcome as Lewis had today, because the FBI and our partners will pursue you and hold you accountable for your actions.”

Jerry Jones and Terry Williams, a subcontractor who aided and abetted Jerry Jones and Sherry Lewis, are awaiting trial in state and federal courts for conduct related to the joint state-federal investigation of the Birmingham Water Works Board.

This case was investigated by the Alabama Attorney General’s Office, Special Prosecution Division and the FBI. It was prosecuted by the Attorney General’s Special Prosecutions Division.