

Jail for NLB exec who took \$140k in bribes from 2 firms' directors

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A National Library Board (NLB) assistant director corruptly obtained bribes totalling \$140,000 from the directors of two different firms between 2018 and 2020.

Adrian Chan Siew Leng, who was facing financial difficulties because of loans and his divorce, committed the offences in exchange for advancing the firms' interests with the NLB.

Chan also worked with one of the directors to cheat the board into paying an additional sum of \$246,100 to one of the firms, Broadcast Engineering Services (BES), which provided media entertainment technology solutions.

On Sept 17, the 50-year-old Singaporean was sentenced to two

years, 10 months and 10 weeks' jail.

He was also ordered to pay a penalty of more than \$103,000 and will have to spend an additional 103 days behind bars should he fail to settle the amount.

He had pleaded guilty to six charges for offences including cheating and graft. Six other charges, including those linked to the remaining amount, were considered during his sentencing.

The NLB suspended Chan from his duties in June 2020 when it was notified of an investigation into his case.

In 2018 and 2019, Chan obtained \$90,000 in bribes from Francis Lim Boon Hor, 51, who was a director at BES at the time, said Deputy Public Prosecutor Tan Pei Wei.

She added that in March 2017 or some time before, NLB began preparing for a tender to "ramp up" the audio-visual infrastructure

and systems of the National Archives of Singapore (NAS).

Chan, who had been deployed to the NAS, was the project manager for this tender and obtained quotations from BES.

The tender opened in October 2017 and closed the following month. BES was awarded the project, worth more than \$8 million, in January 2018.

On or before April 26 that year, Chan asked Lim if BES was "open for sponsorship/scholarship" for Chan's master's programme.

DPP Tan said: "The accused believed that Francis would not turn him down because the accused had helped BES with previous tenders."

"Francis knew that the accused had the power to help BES... and also in obtaining future contracts from NLB."

The prosecutor added that Chan

made the request despite knowing that it was wrong for him to obtain money from Lim.

She told the court that Chan later obtained bribes totalling \$90,000 from Lim.

Separately, Chan also conspired with Lim to cheat the NLB by dishonestly concealing variations in the contract linked to the audio-visual infrastructure and systems.

Chan had asked for several variations in the contract and knew these changes would result in savings, as the substitutes were cheaper than the original goods and services BES had to provide to NLB.

On or before March 7, 2018, Chan instructed Lim to draft an e-mail to NAS concerning two variations, making it seem as though the request for changes came from BES.

The DPP said Chan also instructed Lim to lie in the e-mail, stating these variations would not cause any changes to the cost.

Lim then did as instructed, the court heard.

DPP Tan said: "Due to (Chan's) dishonest concealment of the savings ensuing from the relevant contract variations, NLB was deceived into paying an additional

sum of \$246,100 to BES, which the latter was not entitled to receive."

Court documents stated that Chan also conspired with his close friend Puan Kai Hsiong, 51, to cheat BES in 2019.

Puan was then a director at Pan Prebuild (PPP), a company providing building construction services.

Chan introduced Puan to Lim some time between late March and early April 2018. He told Lim that BES should engage PPP as a subcontractor to carry out works on NAS premises in Canning Rise near Fort Canning.

BES then engaged PPP for several jobs.

However, the NLB had already engaged other contractors instead of PPP for some of these works.

BES was duped into paying \$30,000 to PPP on April 3, 2019.

DPP Tan said Chan later obtained bribes totalling \$50,000 from Puan.

Chan's bail was set at \$150,000 on Sept 17, and he is expected to begin serving his sentence on Oct 29.

The cases involving Lim and Puan are pending.