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Grand Jury Won't Indict Glassboro Highway Official It Found Nothing Criminal In Clayton Platt's Using Department Employees For His Firm.

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By Mary Beth Warner, INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT
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WOODBURY — A Gloucester County grand jury decided not to indict Clayton "Duffy" Platt, the suspended director of Glassboro's highway department, even though jurors found that he had used department employees for his own construction company and ordered trash picked up from some businesses but not others.

Instead, the grand jury issued a presentment recommending better guidelines be installed for the highway department employees and calling for more accountability by the director.

The grand jury's decision, reached Oct. 3, was released by Gloucester County Prosecutor Harris Y. Cotton yesterday, after the deadline for appeal had expired.

Neither Platt nor his attorney could be reached last night for comment.

"I'm glad to see that they finished," Councilman David Dougherty, who oversees the highway department, said of the grand jury investigation. "And I'm glad to see that they found mismanagement, which is what we expected that they would find."

Platt - who has worked for the borough for 25 years - was sus-

pended with pay from his position in June. He continued to receive his weekly checks because he had been previously granted tenure by the borough, said Dougherty.

Dougherty said he did not know Platt's salary.

Platt's suspension followed the discovery by council members that he had purchased two desks worth \$12,000 for the highway department and had misled officials as to when the desks were to be paid for, Dougherty said.

This followed a request by borough Solicitor Timothy Scaffidi for the Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office to look into alleged wrongdoings by Platt.

The grand jury found that there were wrongdoings, though not criminal offenses, in two main areas.

The highway department, under Platt's direction, picked up trash from some local businesses, while others were forced to contract privately for pickup. At the time, the borough was obligated to pick up trash from all businesses.

Testimony before the grand jury led the members to write in the presentment: "It seemed to be fairly common knowledge within the borough that in order to get some special treatment from the highway department, you had to know Duffy."

After months of debate on the trash issue, the Glassboro council voted in April to stop all municipal trash pickup for borough businesses.

The grand jury also found that dirt from the Double Tree Development, which was supposed to be given to the borough, was loaded by borough employees onto trucks owned by Har Clay Builders - which is owned in part by Platt - and delivered to Har Clay building sites. The grand jury found that Har Clay had also used highway department personnel to remove construction debris from its building sites.

Now that the grand jury has reached a decision, Dougherty said the borough's highway committee, which consists of himself and Councilmen Chris Painter and Joseph Brigandi Jr., would decide after a review whether to continue Platt's suspension, reinstate Platt, or remove him from the position.

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