

Edward Mangano and others must explain trips

August 10, 2015 by THE EDITORIAL BOARD /



Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano on Oct. 29, 2013. He is a longtime friend of businessman Harendra Singh. (Credit: Howard Schnapp)

Speaking about how Nassau County deals with bids and contracts, spokesman Brian Nevin said it "has the most transparent process known to government."

That's demonstrably false, but it's becoming truer, thanks to the light cast by Newsday reporters, and investigations by the U.S.

attorney's office in Brooklyn and the Nassau County prosecutor. And what can be seen from these looks inside county government is an effluent-filled sewer. Perhaps the most clearly damning revelation came in a Newsday story Monday that said local restaurateur Harendra Singh paid for trips for County Executive Edward Mangano, his wife, Linda, and their sons, and for Oyster Bay deputy town attorney Frederick Mei. Records show Singh and his employees worked with a travel agency to arrange two trips for Mangano: one to The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2012 and another to The Regent Grand in Turks and Caicos in 2013. That 2013 trip for the Mangano family and Singh's group combined cost \$17,498.

The issue is that Singh has been a contractor for both the county and Oyster Bay, whose town Republican Party has been a base of operations for Mangano. A Singh company got a \$238,200 no-bid contract to provide food for county employees after superstorm Sandy. Singh has also employed Mangano's wife and son.

Singh employees also coordinated and arranged payment for at least three trips for Oyster Bay's Mei, two to India and one to South Korea. Meanwhile, Mei was instrumental in negotiating deals that gave Singh control of valuable concessions at a town beach through 2065 and at a town golf course through 2070. Did town taxpayers get the best deals possible? Emails show Mei was also deeply involved in Singh's efforts to secure several loans and a line of credit. Why?

Laws bar public officials from taking gifts from individuals or entities doing business with their government agencies. With the county and town, Singh's dealings seem to more than fit the description.

advertisement | [advertise on newsday](#)

Singh also bought a failing restaurant from Oyster Bay planning and development commissioner Frederick Ippolito, who owed more than \$100,000 in taxes on the property, then Singh shut it soon after. It was a nice favor from a kind friend, but Ippolito still hasn't paid the taxes. Separately, the IRS has charged Ippolito with evading taxes on \$2 million in "consulting fees" from a paving company that contracted with the town.

Also close to Singh, Mangano, Mei and Ippolito is Oyster Bay Supervisor John Venditto, who had a say in the ridiculously lengthy concession agreements with Singh and the town's paving contracts.

It's possible that Mangano and Mei reimbursed Singh for their luxury travels. If that's true, proving it will be easy. Monday, spokesman Nevin released a statement: "The story today in Newsday (about Singh and the travel for Mangano and Mei) includes unwarranted inferences that are completely misleading, inaccurate and convey a false impression."

If that's the case, Nevin and Town of Oyster Bay officials simply need to dredge up some of that vaunted transparency and prove nobody took gifts of any kind from Singh by showing how they paid for their travel.

[< back to article](#)