



## **News Release**

**December 12, 2018**

**Contact:**

Laura Maher, Strategic Communications Manager

Phone: 779-348-7331

E-mail: [Laura.Maher@rockfordil.gov](mailto:Laura.Maher@rockfordil.gov)

### **Essex Update: Judge Holds President of A-W-Bennett Personally in Contempt of Court**

**ROCKFORD, Ill.** – Today, Judge Lisa Fabiano held Paul Bennett, the president of A-W-Bennett Enterprises, Inc., personally in contempt of court for willfully refusing to direct the corporation to complete the demolition of the Essex building, as previously ordered by the court. Judge Fabiano entered a sanction against Mr. Bennett personally for \$216,000 – the estimated cost to complete the demolition; half of which is due within 14 days and the balance within 30 days.

Both parties are scheduled to appear in court in three weeks. If Mr. Bennett fails to make the first payment or complete the demolition by that time, the City will seek further sanctions against him personally, including seizure of personal assets and jail time.

The judge also ordered that funds in the corporate account be turned over within 14 days and that any future income be held. The company is also prohibited from making any other payments or distributions to any other person or entity until the \$216,000 sanction is satisfied.

In addition, the Essex property cannot be sold unless sufficient funds are escrowed at closing to pay the cost of the demolition.

###