

Far East Mayor Faces Abuse Case

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Vladislav Skvortsov, mayor of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, is suspected of defrauding the local budget of more than 2 million rubles (\$63,900) by authorizing a senior policeman to illegally privatize a city-owned apartment, according to the regional branch of the Investigative Committee.

The head of the regional police's investigative department, who was not identified, became the owner of a three-room apartment in Petropavlovsk in summer 2009, regional investigators said Sunday [in a statement](#).

A preliminary check has begun, the statement said. Skvortsov faces up to seven years in prison if charged and convicted of abuse of authority. He has not commented publicly on the accusations.

Skvortsov was expelled last week from the ruling United Russia party for “discrediting” himself and was advised to resign voluntarily, a recommendation he promised to consider.

The mayor, who was re-elected last year on United Russia's ticket, came under fire recently over the dismal state of the city's public utilities, with the country's top sanitary doctor,

Gennady Onishchenko, calling Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in August "the dirtiest and shabbiest city" in Russia.

In 2005, Skvortsov's predecessor, Yury Golenishchev, received a suspended four-year prison term for abuse of office, which also cost the local budget 2 million rubles. Golenishchev was found guilty of ordering pipes for the city's heating system from a Moscow-based company at inflated prices.

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