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January 23, 2013

Clerk of Court
Mitchell H. Cohen Bldg
4th & Cooper Sts.
Camden, NJ 08101

RE: Camden Police Case

To Whom It May Concern::

Per my telephone conversation with Brian on January 15, this is a request for a list of the 87 Plaintiffs who will receive a \$3.5 million settlement due to the lawsuit against the Camden Police Department. I have enclosed a copy of the Courier Post newspaper article for your reference.

N.J.S.A . 2A:17-56.23b obligates the parties or beneficiaries, estate representatives, their attorneys and insurance carriers to search the child support judgment docket to determine whether the prevailing party or beneficiary is a child support debtor prior to disbursing the net proceeds of any settlement negotiated prior or subsequent to the filing of a lawsuit, civil judgment, civil arbitration award, inheritance, or workers' compensation award. Unfortunately, sometimes this does not always happen.

If you need further assistance, please contact me at 856-661-2723.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith
Supervisor II

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Camden approves \$3.5M payout

87 sued the city for false arrests

Jan 10, 2013 | Comments

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Written by
George Mast
Courier-Post Staff

Camden City Council has authorized a \$3.5 million settlement payout to 87 people who sued the city's police department on claims they were falsely arrested by rogue Camden police officers, city officials confirmed Wednesday.

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The city will pay out \$1.88 million and its insurance provider will cover the remaining \$1.66 million, according to city spokesman Robert Corrales.

In documents filed in the cases Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Robert Kubler ordered the payout be completed by Feb. 15.

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According to Corrales, one other related lawsuit against the department was not settled. Information about that case was not immediately available late Wednesday.

The American Civil Liberties Union's New Jersey Chapter issued a notice Wednesday evening that the settlement will pay damages to those "whose convictions were overturned because of egregious misconduct committed by a group of officers in the Camden Police Department."

Attorneys for the ACLU are expected to discuss the settlement today. The ACLU represented a Camden man in his lawsuit against police.

The federal lawsuits began two years ago as authorities started to unravel years of corruption and false arrests by a group of narcotics officers. In all, approximately 200 drug cases were dropped as authorities determined the credibility of the officers' work had been called into question.

In some cases, men who had spent months in jail for drug charges were suddenly released and their convictions cleared.

According to earlier court filings, the average length of incarceration for the dozens of plaintiffs was 510 days. Together, the group spent a collective 107 years in prison.

Individual settlement payouts were expected to be based on a formula that considered the plaintiffs' length of incarceration.

A state law, which wouldn't apply to the settlement reached in

federal court this week, sets compensation at \$54.79 per day for those wrongly imprisoned. At least 11 settlement agreements have been reached in state court cases related to the alleged false arrests, with damages totaling \$340,000.

The cases, most filed in federal court, were consolidated for efficiency and continued to grow in number over the past years.

Three of the officers involved in the corruption — Dan Morris, Kevin Parry and Jason Stetser — pleaded guilty in 2010 and testified in the December 2011 trial of a fourth officer, Antonio Figueroa.

During their plea hearings and Figueroa's trial, the officers' testimony added credence to some of the lawsuits as specific instances were described where the officers arrested suspects with planted drugs and illegal searches. Figueroa was convicted in the trial, but a fifth officer, Robert Bayard, was acquitted.

Stetser, the last remaining officer to be sentenced, is scheduled to find out his jail term in federal court in Camden next Thursday. Sentences for the other officers have ranged from eight months to 10 years in federal prison.

Reach George Mast at (856) 486-2465.

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