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## Ga. City to Pay \$1M To Settle Police Chief Harassment Suit

By [Rachel Stone](#) · October 15, 2021, 8:43 PM EDT

A Georgia city inked a \$1 million settlement with three female former employees who claimed the city's ex-police chief sexually harassed and touched them without their consent while the former city manager did nothing to stop it, according to a Friday law firm press release.

According to the press release from Atlanta employment law firm [Buckley Beal LLP](#), the city of Jesup, the city's ex-police chief and its retired city manager reached an agreement to resolve the former city workers' Title VII sex discrimination and harassment suit.

As the settlement agreement in Georgia federal court obtained by Law360 stated, in exchange for the parties

releasing their claims, the Georgia Interlocal [Risk Management Agency](#) insurance fund shall pay each of the three former employee plaintiffs \$193,635 in compensatory damages, and will distribute \$419,039 to plaintiffs' counsel.

Additionally, the settlement established that the plaintiffs are barred from applying to jobs with the city of Jesup.

"Any application for employment submitted in contradiction to this paragraph shall be deemed a legal nullity," the settlement said.

The agreement also emphasized that ex-police chief William Michael "Mike" Lane, ex-city manager Mike Deal and the city of Jesup deny any liability, and that the settlement should not be construed as an admission of such.

The deal, signed in late September, precedes Tuesday's joint stipulation, in which the parties — the three former city employees, along with defendants Lane and Deal — agreed to end the case.

Friday's press release noted that, shortly after the [February lawsuit](#), Lane was fired and Deal resigned from his position. The city's official website currently shows that Rose Marcus was made interim city manager this past June, and the site lists Perry Morgan as chief of the Jesup Police Department.

The former city employees alleged in their suit that while Lane was police chief, he made constant sexual advances and made their workplace so intolerable that they had to quit. They further alleged that Deal refused to enforce the city's discipline policy against Lane and said he would only put Lane on leave if someone was arrested.

In their suit, the former city employees claimed that Lane "had a pattern of preying on young female employees," and that he would frequently proposition them with requests for sex.

When one employee revealed that she had a boyfriend, she claimed, Lane began retaliating against her, while another plaintiff claimed that Lane's harassment of her increased after he found out she'd gotten divorced.

"Women should not be subjected to such egregious sexual harassment and outright sexual assault in the workplace," said Rachel Berlin Benjamin in the Buckley Beal press release.

"With this settlement, we've held the City of Jesup and the individual defendants accountable for their unlawful actions," Benjamin's statement continued.

Lane and Deal could not be immediately reached for comment Friday.

Counsel for Lane, Deal and the city of Jesup did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday.

A spokesperson for the city of Jesup, Georgia, did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday.

The women are represented by Edward D. Buckley, Alessandra Palazzolo and Rachel Berlin Benjamin of Buckley Beal LLP; Andrew Lampros and Gordon Van Remmen of Hall & Lampros LLP; and Joseph R. Padgett of Roden Law.

The city of Jesup, Georgia, is represented by Emily Rose Hancock and Richard K. Strickland of [Brown Readdick Bumgartner Carter Strickland & Watkins LLP](#).

William Michael Lane is represented by Patricia T. Paul and Patrick T. O'Connor of [Oliver Maner LLP](#).

Mike Deal is represented by Scott W. Kelly and John Edward Price of [Fulcher Hagler LLP](#).

The case is Brantley et al., v. City of Jesup et al., case number [2:21-cv-00012](#), in the [U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia](#).

--Editing by Abbie Sarfo.

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