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Rogue cops cost Eugene more than \$1 million

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two rogue Eugene police officers are in prison now, but claims against the city for the officers' actions have cost more than \$1 million — and more are coming in.

This month Eugene agreed to pay \$250,000 to settle three lawsuits prompted by former police officers Roger Magana and Juan Francisco Lara, bringing the total so far to more than \$1.06 million. Another woman sued last month, the 14th to do so in the case.

Magana is serving a 94-year prison sentence for raping, sexually abusing or harassing 13 women during his eight years on the force. Lara, who served less than three years in uniform, is serving more than five years for using his position to coerce women into having sex while he was on duty.

The scandal and concerns about racial profiling led to changes in the Police Department, expensive reviews and an election proposal for citizen oversight of complaints

against officers.

This weekend, voters should start getting ballots on the city charter amendment that would allow the city to hire a police monitor and appoint a citizen review board. The election is Nov. 8.

A memo from City Manager Dennis Taylor did not disclose the names of the plaintiffs.

One settlement, for \$62,500, was on behalf of the "estate of TLA."

The estate alleged that while he was on duty, Magana sexually assaulted the plaintiff three times, Taylor said. Magana was convicted of coercion, a felony, Taylor wrote.

The Register-Guard identified her last year as Tommie Lea Allen after her death, which was attributed to a drug overdose.

The city settled the second case for \$127,000. A woman alleged that Magana sexually assaulted her several times over two years while he was on duty, Taylor wrote.

The city settled the third case for

\$60,000. Lara planted evidence on the plaintiff before sexually assaulting her, according to the woman's lawsuit, Taylor wrote. Lara "later suggested that he could resolve the criminal charges in exchange for sexual favors," a memo from Taylor said.

Taylor said the remaining cases are to go to trial in July.

Several officers and supervisors heard complaints about Magana, but they ignored or dismissed them, according to police files.

A woman sued in Sept. 5 seeking unspecified damages, claiming the city was negligent in hiring, supervising and keeping Magana on the police force "when it knew or reasonably should have known that Officer Magana was unfit to serve as a police officer."

The woman said she was sexually assaulted by Magana about 25 times between 2000 and early 2002.

The lawsuit said Magana preyed on women with drug or alcohol problems.



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A PIECE OF MY HEART
BY SHIRLEY LAURO

Proposal asks for housing fee to fund school construction

BY CHARLES E. BEGGS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALEM — Local governments can charge housing developers for costs of expanding sewer and water systems and even for new parks — but not for building more classrooms when growth crowds local schools.

An education advocacy group plans to put an initiative on the statewide ballot next year that would change that.

The idea is that developers of the subdivisions springing up in the state's fast-growing areas should help school systems pay for needed expansion.

Initial polling indicates strong support for such a measure, said Jonah Edelman, executive director of Portland-based Stand for Children.

"Parents all across the state care deeply about this," Edelman said. "And many taxpayers are tired of footing the tax bill for school construction while developers pay nothing."

The proposed ballot initiative would add schools to a law allowing local governments to impose "systems development charges" on new homes to pay for public improvements that go along with housing expansion.

The charges now are restricted to funding sewer and water projects, transportation and parks and recreation.

The group has filed with state elections officials three versions of proposed initiatives and is doing

polling to get readings on which version would sell best with voters.

Two versions would put caps on the development charge, of \$3,500 or \$4,500 per house, and one would not. Backers would need to collect 75,000 petition signatures by July to put a measure on the November 2006 ballot.

Edelman said his organization is "very receptive to a capped fee" because the goal is for the charges to pay some but not all the expense of building or expanding schools. That would reduce the costs to taxpayers of bond issues to finance the remainder.

"We want developers to contribute their fair share, and that's all," Edelman said.

He said 11 states permit systems-development charges for schools, including Washington and California.

Bills to permit systems-development charges for schools have been introduced for years in the Legislature and gone nowhere against opposition from home builders' groups.

The state's main home construction organization argues that such charges are a poor way to fund improvements and that the fees raise already high housing costs.

Jon Chandler, chief executive officer of the Oregon Building Industry Association, said development charges are an inefficient way to raise money, besides boosting already soaring home prices.

The fees are passed along to buyers

"and they will pay for them through the life of their mortgages," he said.

"And the issue that keeps getting lost in these days of housing inflation is that Oregon has one of the lowest home ownership rates in country, and it's getting worse as prices increase," Chandler said.

But Edelman said he expects support from many individual developers, because they know that schools with jammed classrooms don't help property values.

Not providing adequate schools "is really shortsighted because good schools are going to be attractive to homeowners," said Sharon Rockett, who is one of three sponsors of the proposed initiative and lives in rapidly growing Bend.

School grounds dotted with portable classrooms lower home values, she said.

Pauline McGuire of Oregon City, another sponsor of the ballot proposals, said she has a child in an elementary school that was designed for 550 students and that is serving 807 pupils this year.

She said growth "should pay its own way. It's worth a little extra to have good schools."

Rockett said a \$4,500 fee likely wouldn't be a big concern to a buyer of a \$300,000 house.

But Chandler said school development charges could make it more difficult to win voter approval of bond measures needed to pay the remainder of school construction costs.

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