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BREAKING

## Anoka County Board of Commissioners settles excessive force lawsuit

Sam Lenhart Sep 19, 2018 Updated 20 hrs ago

The Anoka County Board of Commissioners has agreed to pay \$350,000 to a Ham Lake man who says he was a victim of excessive force during a 2016 arrest.

According to a lawsuit filed in federal court, Trevor J. Olesen, 22, suffered “gaping wounds” to his leg after the K-9 was deployed on him while he was handcuffed on his stomach.

The incident, which occurred on May 26, 2016, was partially captured on video by a drone from the Anoka County Sheriffs Office and from a squad car camera.

“The video shows Trevor being viciously attacked by the dog,” said Olesen’s attorney Katie Bennett. “The officer was also being very unprofessional. It was pretty gruesome.”

According to the lawsuit, Anoka County Sheriffs Office deputies were called to an abandoned home in Oak Grove on a report of a burglary. Responding to a request for assistance, when Fridley Police Department officer Tom Roddy and K-9 Jax arrived, they found Olesen hiding inside a nearby dumpster.

Roddy ordered Olesen to get out of the dumpster and lay on the ground. Olesen complied with the officer’s orders and was handcuffed.

The lawsuit goes on to state that, “the next thing Olesen knew, while he was on the ground and surrounded by officers who were in positions of control over Olesen, defendant Roddy released Jax on him.”

K-9 Jax was engaged with Olesen for approximately 23 seconds, during which Roddy attempted to “choke” Jax off his bite. Roddy then activated the dog’s shock collar, which was done either improperly or ineffectively, as the attack continued after the E-Collar was activated, according to the suit. Eventually, a few seconds later, Jax released his grip on Olesen.

Although Olesen was convicted and charged for the burglary, the suit claimed that Roddy violated Olesen's Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment rights to be free from "excessive force through the gratuitous use of K-9 Jax."

The Anoka County Board of Commissioners settled the lawsuit with Olesen and agreed to pay \$350,000 during the Sept. 11 meeting.

"Trevor is glad to put this behind him," said Bennett. "He took responsibility for his actions and now he is happy that the police officers are taking responsibility for what happened to him as well."

K-9 Jax was retired from the department in February 2018 and has since been replaced by K-9 Finn.

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slenhart