

**INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION
COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**

DATE: July 2, 2014

TO: Marina Dimitrijevic, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Molly J. Zillig, Principal Assistant Corporation Counsel

SUBJECT: *Dena Hunt, et al. v. Milwaukee County*
U.S. District Court, E.D. Case No. 13CV00586

I request that this matter be referred to the Committee on Judiciary, Safety and General Services for approval of a settlement. I request authority to settle the claims of plaintiff Dena Hunt ("Hunt") for a payment of back wages by Milwaukee County in the amount of \$43,336.31 and a payment by the Wisconsin County Mutual of attorneys' fees in the amount of \$45,000.00. The back wages will be paid from the Department of Health and Human Services' 2014 Salary Budget.

Hunt's claims are similar and related to the claims of Jean Wolfgang and Jean Orlow. The Committee and the Board approved settlements of the Wolfgang and Orlow claims in the May cycle (File Nos. 14-384 and 14-385). The Hunt claim is the last known claim related to these issues.

Hunt (female) has sued Milwaukee County alleging gender discrimination in violation of the Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection Clause. From July 25, 2011 to April 27, 2013, Hunt worked for the Department of Health and Human Services in the Housing Division as a Housing and Development Program Coordinator in pay grade 28M at Step 4. She alleges that there were two (2) male Program Coordinators in the Housing Division doing her same job, but being paid in pay grade 31M and receiving a higher hourly wage than Hunt. In April 2013, the position itself underwent a compensation study that resulted in a position reclassification to Housing Program Manager in pay grade 33M. Although the reclassification process increased Hunt's hourly wage, she continued to receive less compensation than her two (2) male predecessors received.

Settlement of this matter will result in a payment by Milwaukee County to Hunt for back wages in 2011 through 2014 in the amount of \$43,336.31 minus

appropriate payroll deductions. In addition, Milwaukee County will advance Hunt from Step 3 to Step 5 in her current pay grade 33M.

This proposed settlement followed extensive discovery exchanged between the parties. The parties attended a mediation with U.S. District Court Judge Nancy Joseph who helped negotiate this settlement. Hunt will dismiss her federal lawsuit and provide the County with a full and complete release.

Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation will pay \$45,000 for attorney's fees. This amount is a settlement of attorneys' fees claimed for both the Hunt case and for the Wolfgang case. That case was settled with a back pay award and step increase to Ms. Wolfgang, but the attorney fees issue in the Wolfgang case was held in abeyance pending the settlement or trial of the Hunt case. At the mediation, attorneys' fees were claimed for both cases in the approximate amount of \$83,000, but were negotiated to the \$45,000 amount.

Corporation Counsel and the Wisconsin County Mutual recommend this settlement for approval.



Molly J. Zillig, Assistant Corporation Counsel

cc: Kelly Bablitch
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