



Former Deputy City Manager Sues Homestead Over Release of Racy Text Messages Johanna Faddis Claims Invasion of Privacy, Files Suit Against City, Council Members

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HOMESTEAD, Fla., Sep 07, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Former Homestead Deputy City Manager Johanna Faddis last week filed a lawsuit against the City of Homestead and six sitting city council members. Faddis claims the city and council violated her privacy when they released copies of private e-mails and text messages that included untoward and unwanted advances from former City Manager Mike Shehadeh. The suit seeks compensatory damages from all parties.

In the lawsuit filed in Miami-Dade Circuit Court, Faddis claims that the City of Homestead was negligent when it distributed electronic copies of Shehadeh's e-mail, text and BlackBerry PIN messages to six council members in 2010. The city had previously terminated Faddis due to "reduction in force." The messages then appeared in several local news outlets and were used as a basis for news stories in The Miami Herald, The Miami New Times, South Florida Times, The South Dade News Leader and WTVJ, the NBC affiliate television station in Miami. The city council members and the city's private investigator were the only parties who had copies of the messages.

Faddis is also suing for invasion of privacy: Vice Mayor Judy Waldman and council members Elvis Maldonado, Stephen Shelley, Jimmie L. Williams, Wendy Lobos and John Burgess. Private investigation firm, Franklin Investigations, Inc., is also named in the suit.

"In the city's overzealous effort to bring down Mike Shehadeh, it failed to protect one of its own from collateral damage," said Faddis' attorney Kelsay Patterson. "Johanna Faddis never responded to Shehadeh's advances, but instead of viewing this as a potential case of sexual harassment against a married city employee, the city and council chose the sensational route and cast her as a participant in an adulterous relationship. Faddis has been irreparably harmed." Additional counts in the lawsuits name Waldman for defamation and the intentional infliction of emotional distress due in part to the vice mayor's ongoing communications with the media. Specifically, the suit states that, "Waldman's statements to the Miami Herald implied and created the reasonable inference of an inappropriate, offensive, false and objectionable relationship engaged between the plaintiff and Mike Shehadeh, and Waldman's statements in this regard caused the plaintiff injury and/or damage." According to Patterson, Faddis had an expectation of privacy based on City of Homestead policy and a recent ruling by Miami-Dade County Circuit Court Judge David Miller, in the Shehadeh severance matter, regarding personal usage of city-issued mobile phones.

A copy is of the lawsuit is available for download at Faddis v. Homestead. Based in Tampa, the law offices of Kelsay Patterson practice in the areas of employment discrimination, health insurance, ERISA, automobile accidents and injuries. More information is available at 813-975-7269 and kplaw@bellsouth.net.

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