

# City council hears about lawsuit, compost, body cameras and more



Thu, Jul 27, 2017  
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The Hastings City Council entered closed session Monday to consult with city attorney Stephanie Fekkes to discuss trial and settlement strategies regarding a pending litigation.

A federal suit was filed April 11 in the U.S. Western District Court by Hastings Police Sgt. Cleon Brown.

Brown claims he was harassed and mistreated within the police department and by city officials after learning he is 18 percent African-American. The lawsuit names the City of Hastings, City Manager Jeff Mansfield, Police Chief Jeff Pratt, Deputy Chief Dale Boulter, Sgt. Kris Miller and officer Josh Sensiba.

Mansfield said the city council made no decisions made as a result of Monday's closed session.

"We're scheduled to appear in federal court to set a schedule. Federal court requirements are very different than at local levels," Mansfield said. "It's really a lengthy process."

In other business, the council approved applying to a secretary of state for a grant to purchase a new voting system.

Council members gave unanimous approval for Mayor David Tossava to sign an agreement between Rutland Charter Township, Double B Real Estate and the City of Hastings for a city water extension to the new site of Hastings Fiberglass plant on Green Street.

The city clerk received approval to enter into a five-year agreement with Axon to purchase body cameras for Hastings Police Department at a cost of \$34,570. The purchase of a 2018 Ford Taurus SEL for use by the chief of police also was approved. The car will be purchased from Signature Ford Lincoln in Owosso for \$21,458.

The city clerk was authorized to sign and submit required documents for amendments effective July 1 to Municipal Employees' Retirement System Hybrid Plan Adoption Agreements.

Changes to the agreements are increases to the employer contribution rate for city employees. Department of public services employees, affiliated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, hired after July 1, 2007, will increase from 5.63 percent to 6.15 percent. General non-union employees hired after July 1, 2008, will increase from 5.30 percent to 5.38 percent, and police union

employees hired after July 1, 2010, will see an increase from 5.45 percent to 5.55.

***Establishing hours of operation for compostable material drop-off was recommended by Mansfield.***

***“We’re just getting an unbelievable amount of material out there and not all compostable material,” Mansfield said, adding that large biodegradable material, such as large trees, also is a problem.***

***Drop-off hours matching operational hours, which would be Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., was recommended by Mansfield.***

***“We think people are coming in after hours and taking advantage of the situation,” Mansfield said. “At this point, we just need to something to limit the amount of material coming in and the non-compostable material.”***

***Tossava agreed that temporarily limiting drop-off hours would be a deterrent. He said most people would not drop off inappropriate material with other vehicles coming and going from the site.***

***“Good idea,” Tossava said.***