

Council aide protests firing over check

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A former City Council aide in Chula Vista says she was fired because she refused to deposit a check she thought was made out to the city in error.

The aide, Shari Watson, filed a wrongful termination lawsuit last month against the city and Deputy Mayor Rudy Ramirez.

She claims Ramirez in September insisted she deposit the \$2,400 check from Cox Communications made out to, "The City of Chula Vista/International Friendship Games," even though the company had only agreed to a \$1,000 sponsorship for the annual youth athletic event.

The company now says the check was intended to pay for city permits unrelated to the games, and was made out by mistake because of an auto-complete function in the check processing program.

Watson says she wanted to call Cox before depositing the check. Ramirez says he intended to deposit the check, then sort things out later.

"It was just a clerical mistake," Ramirez said. "We had to deposit the check anyway. It all gets processed through the finance department. At some point, I was going to ask them about it. I knew at some point we would get to the bottom of it."

Ramirez said the lawsuit was meritless and that Watson was fired for her "inability to take direction."

Watson says she was just trying to do what was right.

Her attorney, [Josh Gruenberg](#), said, "I represent a very devoted public servant who took pride in the work she did for the city. And unfortunately, she wasn't able to convince human resources that the city should reverse the employment decision and she's been forced to into filing a lawsuit to vindicate her rights."

After Watson refused, Ramirez had another staffer deposit the check and it was eventually credited to the right city account.

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