

Suit: Ex-Employee Claims Chula Vista Fired Her Over Ethics

Shari Watson Claims Ramirez Terminated Her When She Questioned Ethics Of Depositing Check

February 15, 2011

A former Chula Vista City Council aide is suing the city for wrongful termination.

Shari Watson was Deputy Mayor Rudy Ramirez's aide for two years before she was fired last September.

"Shari Watson was a very devoted employee for the city of Chula Vista," said her attorney [Josh Gruenberg](#).

Last September, a check was directed to Ramirez's office from Cox Communications for \$2,400. A lawsuit filed in State Superior Court said the check was written to the "City of Chula Vista/International Friendship Games," an annual event hosted by Ramirez. The lawsuit documents said Watson was concerned because the cable company already made a \$1,000 donation. Watson wanted to make sure there wasn't a clerical error.

"She was very conscientious, wanted to make sure the city did the right thing with regard to the money it received," Gruenberg said.

According to the lawsuit, Ramirez ordered Watson to deposit the check without checking. The documents quoted a phone conversation between Watson and Ramirez.

According to the documents, Watson told Ramirez: "I'm not comfortable doing this. You are asking me to do something I think is unethical."

Ramirez terminated her immediately, and Watson, a single mother, is still unemployed.

"Rudy Ramirez lost his temper with her and decided to terminate her because she was taking precautions," said Gruenberg.

A Cox Communications spokeswoman said there was a misprint on the check. It was payment for permitting in the city of Chula Vista, and the money was later redirected to the proper department.

Watson's attorney said her firing was illegal and filed a lawsuit on the former aide's behalf.

Ramirez spoke with 10News and he believed Watson's dismissal was justified and wasn't a knee-jerk reaction.

"She received several warnings months ahead of time and received written reprimands for performance," Ramirez said from his Chula Vista City Hall office.

In fact, Ramirez thinks the lawsuit is politically motivated.

"I am very suspicious about that because it sort of falls in line with a pattern of activity we've had in this city," he said.

The city is also dealing with a multi-million dollar budget shortfall, and Ramirez said a frivolous lawsuit is the last thing the city should be dealing with.

"We have really important things to do in this city and this is just a distraction and so I'm looking forward to getting past it," Ramirez said.

Original Article: <https://www.10news.com/news/suit-ex-employee-claims-chula-vista-fired-her-over-ethics>