

SLT signs settlement in Conner lawsuit

By Kathryn Reed

Mayor Wendy David on Aug. 16 signed the settlement agreement on behalf of South Lake Tahoe. Once City Councilwoman JoAnn Conner does the same, the nearly year-old issue goes away.



JoAnn Conner

Conner in fall 2015 filed a lawsuit against the city – essentially her four colleagues and her employee City Manager Nancy Kerry – because of a censure motion and how she was restricted regarding interacting with staff.

The judge early on said the matter of censure was not something he would rule on.

Going forward Conner will be treated like the other four councilmembers – she may interact with staff, with the city manager copied on all such emails. This is done so council does not start telling staff what to do. It is the council's job to set policy, not tell people – other than the city manager and city attorney – how to do their job.

Also agreed to is there will be no exchange of money.

The city has spent about \$90,000 on the case; Conner has a bill of a little more than \$30,000. The taxpayers pay the city's bill. This year the city has spent about \$107,000 in

outside legal bills, so the bulk of it is on this one case.

Both sides point fingers at the other regarding why it took so long to settle the case, especially when an agreement was reached in June.

Conner deferred comment to her attorney.

“The city manager refused to sign off on parts that she initialed in mediation, so the agreement had to be modified as a result of that,” attorney Jacqueline Mittelstadt told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Bill Chisum, who represented the city and Kerry, told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I would dispute that statement. All parties had issues we worked into the agreement. I would dispute that any one party was refusing to sign.”

Mittelstadt said her client is ready to sign. At that time the two sides intend to issue a joint statement as well as the full settlement agreement.