



April 21, 2026 - Regular Meeting

Subject

Proposal for Settlement from Manatee County to Plaintiff in the Amount of \$35,000.00 in Manatee County Circuit Court Case, Thomas Eppich v. Manatee County and City of Holmes Beach, Case No. 2025-CA-000742.

Category

CONSENT AGENDA

Briefings

Briefing Provided Upon Request

Contact and/or Presenter Information

Angelina Stratton, Assistant County Attorney, Ext. 3746

Action Requested

Motion to authorize the County Attorney's Office to serve a Proposal for Settlement in the amount of \$35,000.00 to Plaintiff, Thomas Eppich, in the matter of Thomas Eppich v. Manatee County and City of Holmes Beach, Case No. 2025-CA-000742, in exchange for a dismissal with prejudice of Plaintiff's claims against the County, and to execute all necessary and related documents in connection with the settlement.

Enabling/Regulating Authority

Section 768.79, Florida Statutes; Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.442; Manatee County Code of Ordinances Article II½, § 2-2-35, and Article VII.

Applicable Advisory Board

N/A

Background Discussion

This is a personal injury case emanating from a bicycle incident that occurred on September 5, 2024. Plaintiff, Thomas Eppich (Plaintiff), while riding his bicycle on Marina Drive in Holmes Beach, rode over a patch of "crush" that was backfilled into an area where excavation had occurred to repair the subject roadway. As Plaintiff rode his bicycle over the crush, he allegedly flipped over the bicycle's handlebars, landing on and fracturing his left elbow. Plaintiff underwent a surgical repair consisting of an open reduction and internal fixation of the fractured left elbow. Plaintiff claims past medical expenses of approximately \$387,360.16. Of that amount, Medicare paid approximately \$19,536.37, and Plaintiff paid out of pocket expenses of approximately \$1,070.68. Medical billing adjustments were applied by Plaintiff's medical providers in the amount of \$366,746.11, leaving a remaining balance of approximately \$7.00.

Based on Plaintiff's alleged injury, claimed medical expenses and treatment, and the costs the County will incur in defending this case at trial, the County Attorney's Office (CAO) recommends that the Board grant the CAO authority to serve a Proposal for Settlement (Proposal) in the amount of \$35,000.00 upon the Plaintiff in exchange for a dismissal with prejudice of Plaintiff's claims against the County.

This matter is currently scheduled for a jury trial on November 30, 2026. If the Plaintiff fails to accept this Proposal within 30 days of the date of service and the case proceeds to trial, the County may be entitled to recover its attorney's fees and costs against Plaintiff depending on the amount of the verdict and final judgment entered in the case.

The CAO conferred with the Director of the Utilities Department, and he concurs with the CAO's recommendation.

Because this case is in active litigation, if any Commissioner has questions regarding this item, we respectfully advise that they request private briefings with the CAO and refrain from discussing it publicly.

Attorney Review

Other (Requires explanation in field below) Stratton
This is a County Attorney item.

Instructions to Board Records

Please email an approved copy of this agenda item to:
Angelina Stratton, Assistant County Attorney, at angelina.stratton@mymanatee.org;
Melissa Mayernick, Paralegal, at melissa.mayernick@mymanatee.org;
Diane Hajek, Legal Assistant, at diane.hajek@mymanatee.org.

Distributed 4/22/26, RT

Cost and Funds Source Account Number and Name

Account Number: 5050001400 Object Code: 549102 (Insurance Claims)

Amount and Frequency of Recurring Costs

N/A