

Fifth Civil Lawsuit Filed Against Former Enfield K-9 Officer



By Mikaela Porter and Dave Altimari
JANUARY 20, 2015, 3:56 PM

ENFIELD – A local man has filed the fifth civil lawsuit against former K-9 Police Officer Matthew Worden.

The latest suit, filed by Hartford attorney A. Paul Spinella, representing 39-year-old David McAlmond of Spruceland Road, claims Worden in March 2012 used a police-style baton found in McAlmond's car and "forcibly slammed the baton upwards between [McAlmond's] legs, violently striking [McAlmond's] groin area." The lawsuit also claims Worden issued a command to his K-9 which subsequently "aggressively attack[ed] [McAlmond], knocking him to the ground."

Worden could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Also named in the lawsuit is the town, the Enfield Police Department, Officers Brian Croteau, Michael Emons, Kyle Kaelberer, Nicholas King, Sgt. Marianne Christensen, two other officers listed as Officer John Doe and Officer Jane Doe, and Police Chief Carl Sferrazza. Sferrazza declined to comment Tuesday.

According to the lawsuit, McAlmond was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of narcotics with intent to sell, possession of a controlled substance, possession of narcotics within 1,500 feet of a school or daycare, two counts of having weapons in a motor vehicle, interfering with an officer, operating under suspension and improper parking. The lawsuit claims all charges were eventually dismissed.

Worden approached McAlmond on Summer Street around 8:15 p.m. on March 2, 2012, after McAlmond pulled over to use his cell phone. According to the lawsuit, Worden asked McAlmond if he was under the influence of crack cocaine and "demanded" McAlmond get out of the car. McAlmond claims, in his lawsuit, that he

complied, but Worden's police report says McAlmond did not comply and instead appeared to reach toward his car ignition.

According to the lawsuit, McAlmond "candidly informed" Worden that he had a pocket knife in his pocket before exiting the car.

"Upon hearing [McAlmond] was in possession of a pocket knife, Officer Worden immediately yelled 'Weapon!' and dove through the driver's side window, grabbing David McAlmond by the arms and violently slamming his body into the driver's seat," the lawsuit reads.

After Worden and another officer, Croteau, "forcibly applied handcuffs" to McAlmond, the officers made him stand against his car with his legs spread, the lawsuit reads. Worden then took the baton from McAlmond's car and struck him between the legs, according to the suit. McAlmond claims he lost consciousness and fell to the ground. The police report does mention this.

After regaining consciousness, McAlmond claims that two other officers, Emons and King, began walking him to a police cruiser. McAlmond's suit says Worden issued a command to his K-9, which knocked him to the ground and bit and scratched his arms, elbows and back. Worden's report reads that McAlmond "began screaming loudly and repeatedly dropped himself to the ground while jerking his arms" and "his struggling increased to the point that K-9 Falco deployed from [Worden's] driver's side window as he was trained to do..."

"This case is notable because it presents about every type of police use of excessive force other than shooting him," Spinella said. "He was dragged from his car, beaten and struck with a baton and severely bitten by a police dog while he was restrained leaving scars that he still has today."

According to Worden's police report, McAlmond stopped "abruptly" at the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Summer Street "without cause. There was not a stop sign and no other traffic was in the area." Worden also reported that he didn't see a cell phone in the car when he approached McAlmond.

According to the police report, Worden ran McAlmond's car registration and reported that McAlmond had two license suspensions from August and December 2011. "McAlmond's arm and head were involuntarily jerking back and forth and McAlmond's mouth made smacking noises while he spoke... indicative of cocaine or crack cocaine usage," the police report states.

Worden was fired by the department on Oct. 3 over allegations that he used excessive force during the arrest of a Windsor man on April 1, 2014.

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