



## Fort Worth

# Fort Worth to pay \$400,000 to Rainbow Lounge patron injured during raid on gay bar



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FORT WORTH — City leaders voted Tuesday to pay \$400,000 to a gay bar patron severely injured in a police raid two years ago, a settlement that avoided a federal civil rights lawsuit.

The City Council unanimously approved the settlement with Chad Gibson, who claims his head injury was caused by excessive force used by Fort Worth police and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. The council voted quickly Tuesday without discussing the settlement or the Rainbow Lounge raid that sparked protests in the gay community.

After the meeting, Mayor Mike Moncrief told reporters that the settlement is not an admission of any officers' wrongdoing or city liability, but “an attempt to put this behind us and move forward.” He said the city has taken steps to improve sensitivity since the 2009 incident, including adding diversity training for all Fort Worth employees.

“Our diversity in this city is our strength,” he said. “It is not a weakness, and we can't afford to let it become one, nor will we.”

Gibson's attorney had presented the city with a federal civil rights lawsuit — which has no monetary cap — that he intended to file in Austin against the city and the state's liquor board, said Gerald Pruitt, the deputy city attorney. Instead, Fort Worth went into mediation earlier this month and already settled with the other plaintiff, George Armstrong, Pruitt said.

The \$40,000 settlement with Armstrong, who said he suffered a torn rotator cuff, did not require City Council approval because it was less than \$50,000, Pruitt said.

Carolyn Beck, a spokeswoman for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, has said the agency is discussing settlements with both men.

The attorney for Gibson and Armstrong did not immediately return a call seeking comment Tuesday.

Several months after the raid, two agents and a supervisor with the state's liquor board were fired, and three Fort Worth police officers were suspended. Both agencies did their own investigations but determined no excessive force was used.

However, the state liquor board said it would change a number of operating procedures, including how it handles internal affairs cases, and it has added diversity training for employees. The Fort Worth Police Department said it would institute new policies on bar checks and public intoxication arrests.

Also, all charges were later dropped against Gibson, Armstrong and several others who were arrested that night.