

\$1.2M to go to family of woman who died in jail

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Irving has agreed to pay \$1.2 million to the family of a diabetic woman who died while jailed without her medicine.

The City Council voted unanimously on the settlement Thursday, nine months after Sarah Tibbetts collapsed in her cell.

Jail staff knew that the 37-year-old Tibbetts, a mother of two, needed insulin to live. Tibbetts' previous arrests on minor charges often ended with a trip to the hospital for the medicine.

Tibbetts, 37, and her boyfriend were arrested Nov. 1 at a motel. Police said she had a suspicious credit card and traces of marijuana in her purse. Those charges were later dropped.

The next day, jail staff phoned Tibbetts' mother and asked her to bring insulin to the jail. Her mother lived in California.

After Tibbetts had spent nearly two days in jail, surveillance video captured

her struggling on the floor. Staff tried to revive her, but she was pronounced dead at a hospital.

The cause: a lack of insulin.

While the city investigated the death and fired two jail supervisors, Tibbetts' mother and family found a lawyer.

"We were facing Don Tittle," said City Attorney Charles Anderson. "He does an outstanding job."

Tittle has a reputation for winning hefty awards in wrongful-death suits. Irving's council authorized mediation earlier this year to stave off a lawsuit.

The city's insurance will pay \$200,000 of the \$1.2 million, but the settlement may not be finalized for several weeks.

Asked if the city took responsibility for Tibbetts' death, Anderson didn't answer directly.

"Hey, it's not a great situation when someone dies in your jail," he said. "It's just not."

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IRVING

Jail supervisors fired in diabetic inmate's death

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Irving fired two jail supervisors Friday after investigating how an inmate was held for nearly two days without access to medicine before suffering a fatal diabetic attack in her cell.

Meanwhile, the inmate's family has hired a prominent civil rights lawyer as they move toward suing the city.

Jail staff knew that Sarah Tibbetts, 37, needed insulin after police arrested her on minor charges in early November. After 42 hours in custody, she collapsed in her cell and died of diabetic ketoacidosis, which is caused by lack of insulin.



SARAH
TIBBETTS

Rebecca Tibbetts said she urged guards to hospitalize her daughter a day before the death, when jail staff phoned her in California and asked her to bring the insulin down.

"If someone could just fill in the 'why' for me, I might be able to understand the situation a little bit more," she said. "Why did they neglect something like this?"

To find out, she has hired attorney Don Tittle to investigate and possibly file a wrongful death lawsuit for her and Sarah

Tibbetts' two children.

Tittle has been on the winning end of some of the biggest law enforcement scandals in North Texas.

He gained fame in the early 2000s by representing people arrested after Dallas police informants planted fake drugs on them.

In 2008, he won nearly \$1 million for an inmate who had a stroke after Dallas County jail staff denied him blood pressure medicine. It was the largest jury award of its kind in the county.

Just last week, one of Tittle's clients won \$800,000 from Dallas after being wrongly arrested in her boyfriend's death.

But Tittle said the Irving case

is "even more egregious than many I've seen. There appears to be evidence they were completely aware of her need for insulin."

He continued: "It certainly appears there was a violation of her constitutional rights, and it directly led to her death."

The city put two unidentified supervisors on paid leave after Tibbetts' death and fired them after an investigation. Additionally, police said two guards were reprimanded over the incident, and two more received counseling.

Police have not released any further information about the incident, citing a district attorney investigation and possible criminal charges.