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Trenton pays \$850K to family of victim of fatal motorcycle crash, settles other suits

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TRENTON — The family of a motorcyclist who was killed in an April 2013 collision on a dangerous road in the capital city settled a lawsuit against the city for \$850,000.

The city is responsible for \$334,095 of the payout to Julius Thomas, who was killed when another driver, Edwin Horne, crashed into him on Stuyvesant Avenue, near the intersection of Beechwood Avenue, on April 15, 2013.

Thomas, 31, who worked for a decade as a security officer at Ann Klein Forensic Center, died within hours of the violent crash.

His wife, Tiejeka, brought suit against Horne and the city of Trenton in 2015, alleging that Horne may have been speeding and failed to look out for Thomas.

The suit, filed by Clifford Bidlingmaier III, also faulted the city for not maintaining the roads, making driving conditions “unsafe,” according to the lawsuit.

Family attorney Robin Lord said obstructions in that stretch of roadway made it difficult for drivers to see, factoring into the crash.

The council approved the no-fault payout last week following a

closed-door executive session.

The resolution indicated settling was in the “best interest” of the city.

Trenton’s insurance carrier will fork over the remaining \$515,904 of the big-money settlement, according to the resolution.

The city also approved separate settlements of \$10,000 and \$3,450 in unrelated lawsuits.

A \$10,000 payout went to John Smith, who was injured in an accident near South Olden Avenue and Cedar Lane.

The city also agreed to pony up \$3,450 in attorney fees to end a public records lawsuit brought by Ernest Bozzi.

Bozzi, a home improvement contractor, sued after the city refused to turn over dog-licensing records he sought under the Open Public Records Act.

He wanted the records to track down prospective buyers for his invisible fencing pet containment system.

The city initially denied Bozzi’s puppy-paper pursuits claiming his efforts to locate pet-owning residents amounted to unwanted solicitation.

But the city quickly caved once Bozzi's attorney Donald Doherty contended the documents weren’t exempt from disclosure under the state “Sunshine Law.”

Bozzi filed similar public-record suits in more than a dozen municipalities across the state seeking the same records.