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Settlement reached in suit involving harassment claims against Karen Dumas

By [Nancy Kaffer](#)

The city of Detroit has settled a lawsuit involving two former top aides to Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, *Crain's* has learned.

Former Bing staffer Rochelle Collins filed suit against Bing and former Chief Communications Officer Karen Dumas in June, alleging that Dumas had created a hostile work environment.



Karen Dumas

The suit included a number of potentially embarrassing allegations — like the claim that Dumas caused Bing to be late to a meeting with U.S. Sen. Carl Levin because of a shopping trip to the **Burberry** store and that Bing had worked behind the scenes to place current Chief of Staff Kirk Lewis as emergency manager of the **Detroit Public Schools**, firing Lewis after Dumas convinced the mayor that the move would be political suicide.

The suit contends that after Lewis left the city, Collins began reporting to Dumas, who engaged in a campaign of harassment and intimidation, including repeated claims that Collins wasn't performing her job.

The suit claimed that Bing was aware of Dumas' behavior but never moved to censure her.

Collins was fired from the city while on leave for a medical condition.

Dumas resigned from the city two days after the lawsuit was filed.

The settlement must be approved by the **Detroit City Council** before it becomes final.

"It was resolved in the best interest of all parties, and everyone is moving on," said Collins' attorney, Debra Pospiech of **Morgan & Meyers PLC** in Dearborn.

The settlement amount was read and agreed to in open court but hasn't been filed in written form.

Pospiech wouldn't disclose the settlement amount.

Dan Lijana, a communications manager in Bing's office, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Patricia Nemeth of **Nemeth Burwell PC**, who was outside counsel for the city, confirmed that the case has been resolved, subject to City Council approval, but declined to discuss the terms of the settlement.

"It was resolved and the parties are moving on," she said.

Attorneys for both sides are working to bring the settlement to the council before that body goes on recess next week but have until January to bring the deal to council for approval.