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# Aurora mayor calls lawsuit settlement against city 'unfortunate'

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Aurora Mayor Mike Coffman spoke against a lawsuit settlement made between the city of Aurora and activist MiDian Holmes (Shofner) in a City Council meeting Monday night, saying the decision to settle was “unfortunate.”



Aurora officials and Holmes announced the settlement in early March almost a year after Holmes filed the lawsuit, which claimed decisions by council members to end public comment pending a decision in the Kilyn Lewis family lawsuit were unconstitutional.

Under the settlement terms, the Aurora City Council will continue to hold in-person meetings with a public comment period preceding regularly scheduled meetings, giving the public up to one hour of public comment with up to three minutes per speaker for the next three years, according to the settlement agreement.

Additionally, city officials will work through the city's Ad Hoc Rules Committee to develop rules governing City Council conduct with meaningful public input, according to the agreement.

Aurora is also required to pay \$75,000 for attorneys' fees and costs to counsel, the settlement states.

“Ms. Holmes and Aurora are thankful to reach this resolution that affirms the values of the community's perspective in the democratic process,” a joint statement said.

On Monday night, however, the mayor opened the meeting's public comment period with a statement of opposition to the settlement.

“Prior to starting the public comment period, I'd like to state to the members of our audience, both here and watching at home, that I don't approve of the sometimes rude and offensive behavior of some of the individuals who will be speaking this evening,” Coffman said, pointing to the Holmes lawsuit. “The courts unfortunately have been sympathetic in awarding them damages at taxpayers' expense. As I exercise my own First Amendment rights, please know that I personally find their speech as offensive as you do.”

Holmes took the podium during public comment to respond to the mayor's statement.

"You say that you care about taxpayer dollars, but your leadership keeps guiding this city into lawsuit after lawsuit," Holmes said Monday night. "When this council decided to remove public comment and violate the First Amendment, you should've been grappling with that harder than we did. Yet you find yourself in your feelings because you settled a lawsuit that you swore to your constituency you would never do."

Holmes filed the lawsuit in June following a series of Aurora City Council decisions rolling back public comment allowances, alleging the council decisions silenced her and other speakers.

The lawsuit came shortly after councilmembers voted to hold future meetings virtually and get rid of the public comment session altogether until a decision was made in the lawsuit.

Holmes, along with family members and other supporters of Kilyn Lewis, have attended every Aurora City Council meeting for almost two years, in which they have advocated for charges to be filed and the firing of an Aurora Police Department officer involved in the fatal shooting.

The protesters have routinely disrupted the council proceedings.

Lewis, 37, was shot by SWAT officer Michael Dieck on May 23, 2024, while officers were attempting to arrest him on an attempted murder warrant. He was not armed.

In November, Aurora residents elected several new councilmembers, replacing the previously conservative-majority city council with a progressive-majority city council.

One of the first council decisions under the new body was to add one hour of public comment back to each end of the council meetings and restore the three-minute limit for speakers.