Fired cops accused of rape

Police

Mayor, chief mum:

Alleged victim claims former Manchester officers extorted sex from her.

By MARK HAYWARD

New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — Two Manchester police officers who were fired earlier this year are being accused of using their badges to coerce a woman facing criminal charges to have sex with them in exchange for getting the charges dropped, according to a newly filed claim the alleged victim made against the city.

The claim — received by top city and police department officials on June 1 — lays out new allegations against former undercover Detective Darren Murphy, whom Police Chief Nick Willard fired in February, and street-level Detective Aaron Brown, who was fired in April. For months, Willard and city officials have refused to discuss the reasons for the terminations, describing them only as misconduct.

But in the three-page letter, lawyer Olivier Sakellarios writes that Brown coerced his client, Amanda Rogers, to have sex with him in a car parked at the Elliot Hospital parking garage in 2009.

Brown forced Rogers and another woman to show him their breasts in order to secure bail and prevent him from notifying their probation officer, the claim letter states. Brown then started inundating Rogers with telephone calls, ultimately showing up at her house in full uniform and ordering her to meet him at Billy’s Sports Bar. There, the letter states, he bought her drinks and “using his authority, demanded that she have sex with him.”

“Officer Brown repeatedly stated that he was great friends with ‘the location of a department run “safe house” to demonstrate how committed he was to her and that he would not double-cross her.

According to the notice, “ample evidence” exists that police knew about the “ongoing assault,” including a report made to Manchester police by a worker with the state Division of Children, Youth and Families.

Rogers, who is 35, has a history of run-ins with the law, mostly for nonviolent offenses such as theft, drug possession and disorderly conduct, according to newspaper archives. She has also been listed as a victim of domestic assault.

She has pleaded not guilty to several pending charges relating to an alleged identity theft in November 2016.

Lauren Smith, and police spokesman, Lt. Brian O’Keefe, both referred questions to the city solicitor for comment. Craig did not respond to a request for comment.

Deputy City Solicitor Peter Chiesa confirmed that the city received the claim and has forwarded it to the city claims adjuster. The claims adjuster will investigate the issues as well as appropriate damages, he said.

“It doesn’t happen overnight,” he said. “This is very early in the claims review process.”

In his claim letter, Sakellarios terms the conduct aggravated felonious sexual assault, the legal term for rape in New Hampshire. While the allegations do not involve forced sex, state law
prosecutor’ and that she could ‘either go to jail or not go to jail,’ ” the claim reads.

The woman claims she also engaged in an intimate relationship years later with Murphy, from the middle of October 2017 until April 2018. Murphy claimed, according to the paperwork, that he could get a Hillsborough County prosecutor who specializes in drug prosecutions to drop charges and pull strings to have Rogers released on personal recognizance bail.

“These were services he offered in order to coerce sexual favors,” the letter reads.

County Attorney Dennis Hogan declined to address the matter with a reporter.

The claim against the city alleges Murphy used “chief days” — a day off with pay awarded by the chief — to engage in sexual relations with Rogers. The woman also alleges Murphy forced her to buy drugs for his personal use and disclosed the identities of all the police department’s confidential informants, along with

After Willard fired Murphy in February, state prosecutors eventually dropped 35 cases that he played a role in, setting several alleged drug dealers free from jail. In April, Hogan launched a criminal investigation into Murphy’s actions, even though Willard had claimed that Murphy’s misconduct did not violate any criminal laws.

When Willard fired Brown in April, he said the officer would face a criminal investigation.

It’s unclear whether charges have been brought against the former officers. On Friday, Hogan said he has forwarded the cases to Strafford County Attorney Thomas Velardi, a normal practice to avoid any questions of conflicts. Velardi did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment.

Under state law, anyone who wants to sue a city must first file a notice of claim.

Mayor Joyce Craig’s spokesman, equates coerced sex with rape when the assailant uses a position of authority to force sexual activity on a victim.

City officials formally learned of the allegations just two weeks after the Manchester school board authorized spending $1.5 million to settle claims brought by a 14-year-old girl who was raped at West High School in 2015. Last year, Craig and her supporters made campaign claims that then-Mayor Ted Gatsas covered up the West High rape, which played a factor in her election victory.

Craig and Willard received a copy of the claim by certified mail.

“Despite the city and police department being completely aware of these officers’ conduct, no criminal charges have been brought. This suggests collusion by the city and the Department in an effort to ‘cover up’ this police misconduct,” Sakellarios wrote. He called the conduct reprehensible, predatory and serial.