Police, city sued by siblings peppersprayed while handcuffed to bench

Video: The Dec. 20, 2013, incident was captured by a surveillance camera at the Manchester Police Department.

By PAT GROSSMITH

MANCHESTER — Three siblings pepper-sprayed while handcuffed to a police department bench are suing the city and five of its police officers.

The Dec. 20, 2013, incident was captured on video by a surveillance camera at the Manchester Police Department. The video shows Jessica Jones and John Jones, both of 1A Norman Drive, Derry, and Sandra O’Donnell of Dallas appearing agitated and arguing with police before being sprayed by officer Ryan Boyd.

“They were simply yelling at the officer,” Manchester Police Chief Nick Willard, who was assistant chief at the time, told the Union Leader in an interview last September. “He decided to punish them. I thought it was a violation of their constitutional rights and rose to the level of assault.”

Officer Boyd resigned in July 2014, just before a disciplinary hearing was to be convened to consider his termination.

The New Hampshire Attorney General’s Office also investigated the case, but a Hillsborough County grand jury refused to indict Boyd.

The lawsuit, which was moved to U.S. District Court on Jan. 19 from Hillsborough County Superior Court-Northern District, alleges the city and its officers violated the civil rights of the trio.

Attorney John B. Kenison Jr. of Manchester, who is representing the siblings, offered to settle the case for $475,000, but was unable to come to terms with the city’s claims adjuster.

According to police reports, Derry resident Jessica Jones was driving the wrong way on Pine Street with the lights off in her car when Manchester police pulled her over.

She was arrested for drunken driving. Her brother and sister, who police said were intoxicated, were charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. Police reports state all three were uncooperative.

The video shows the three being pepper-sprayed while their hands were handcuffed behind their backs to a bench.

As they waited, Jessica Jones said she pleaded with police to allow her to go to the bathroom.

Eventually, she urinated while clothed in the cell. In an interview last September, Jones said she felt humiliated and enraged.

“I was treated like an animal,” she said. The officers being sued in addition to Boyd are Clifford Ellston,
Patrick Mullen, Kenneth Brunini and Sgt. Stacey Howe. The lawsuit claims they had an obligation to intervene but did nothing.

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Three siblings pepper-sprayed while handcuffed in a holding cell are suing Manchester and five of its police officers.