

TEMPE

Tempe settles police-brutality lawsuit for \$237,500

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Story Highlights

- Tempe approved a \$237,000 settlement over alleged excessive force during a late-night incident on Mill Avenue
- A cab driver claimed a police officer broke his elbow and kneecap

Tempe taxpayers will pony up nearly a quarter of a million dollars to settle a lawsuit over excessive force brought by a taxicab driver against the city's Police Department.

The City Council unanimously approved a \$237,500 payout last week for Aden Ali to settle his 2013 lawsuit, which alleged a Tempe police officer broke Ali's elbow and kneecap.

The incident originated from a late-night altercation between Ali and an unruly passenger in his cab.

On Feb. 12, 2012, Ali picked up a man near Sixth Street and Mill Avenue about 2 a.m.

The man became belligerent over how the fare should be calculated, and the two men eventually wound up in a physical confrontation in the street, according to court records.

Two Tempe bike officers responded to the fight.

One officer handcuffed the passenger, who was White, without incident, while the second officer "went directly to the black man ... picked him up by his clothes and threw him to the ground, jumped on his back and handcuffed him," according to court records.

Ali was eventually taken to a hospital for treatment.

The lawsuit contends the officer's rough takedown broke Ali's left elbow and left kneecap, with both injuries requiring surgery.

The city rejected the allegation that the officer caused Ali's injuries.

Instead, the city contends Ali's injuries stemmed from the fight with his passenger.

Although the city decided to settle the lawsuit, it denies liability.

"In agreeing to settle this civil litigation matter, the City of Tempe, on behalf of itself and on behalf of its officer, does not, under any circumstance, accept any liability for the allegations made by the Plaintiff in its Complaint and specifically denies that the City and/or its officer violated any standard or protocol in relation to the suit," read an e-mail statement from Tempe's City Attorney's Office to *The Arizona Republic*.

Ali originally sought \$1.5 million from the city.