



Cumberland County Mayor Allen Foster

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Justice Consent Decree
March 25, 2021

Cumberland County and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have reached an agreement on discrimination charges for actions that were alleged to have occurred at the Solid Waste Department in 2017 and prior. It was mutually agreed that this issue would be settled by Consent Decree to avoid the risks of lengthy litigation. Both parties have agreed that the Consent Decree is not an adjudication or finding on the merits of the case, and it is not an admission of liability by Cumberland County.

When employee allegations are made, the county is responsible for responding appropriately. The DOJ lawsuit against Cumberland County was for failing to take adequate precautions to prevent the alleged sexual harassment rather than for the actual allegations that were made. In this case, those allegations were not brought to the county, but instead filed directly with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

When I took office as Cumberland County Mayor in September of 2018, the first significant request I made of the County Commission was to create a Human Resources Department. The County Commission unanimously agreed and funded the department. A director was hired, and we began the process of creating a new Personnel and Policy Handbook for the employees of Cumberland County Government.

The old policy, which was a version from County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS), was not bad per se, but it was dated. Employee training was also needed. The new Personnel and Policy Handbook currently in place spells out the processes needed to ensure individuals have multiple reporting avenues as well as the annual training each employee will receive. These procedures are in place and annual employee training is already implemented.

The Consent Decree contained a financial element that was largely covered by insurance. It also covered a few small changes to the new Personnel and Policy Handbook that have already been approved. Cumberland County will continue to improve our policies and procedures as needed to provide a positive work environment for all.

Allen Foster
Cumberland County Mayor