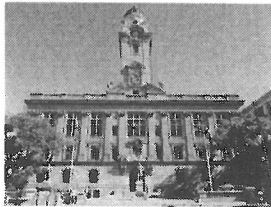


Paterson DPW worker says city supervisor sexually harassed her

Joe Malinconico, Paterson Press

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(Photo: TARIQ ZEHAWI/NorthJersey.com file photo)

PATERSON – A woman who drives a truck for the city's public works department filed a lawsuit this week accusing her supervisor of sexual harassment and Paterson officials of not taking action against him after she reported the problem to them.

The woman, Tyshona Kennedy, claimed in her lawsuit that city officials stopped giving her overtime after she complained about the alleged harassment. She also claimed the city imposed what she described as a "disproportionate" six-month suspension against her as discipline in an unrelated incident.

Kennedy alleged that her supervisor, James Maher, made uninvited sexual advances toward her and made unwanted sexual comments in 2017 between June and October. The lawsuit cited one instance when Kennedy was sick and Maher allegedly offered her some "Jimmycillen" to make her feel better.

"You can take it orally or you can take it anally?" the lawsuit alleges Maher said. "Which way do you want it?"

Maher could not be reached for comment. A woman who answered the phone at his public works office on Wednesday said he was on vacation. Mayor Andre Sayegh said he wanted to confer with his legal staff when asked for comment on Kennedy's allegations.

More: [Fifth Paterson cop arrested in FBI probe, charged with making illegal traffic stop \(/story/news/paterson-press/2018/12/19/fifth-paterson-nj-cop-arrested-fbi-probe-charged-illegal-stop/2362380002/\)](https://www.patersonpress.com/story/news/paterson-press/2018/12/19/fifth-paterson-nj-cop-arrested-fbi-probe-charged-illegal-stop/2362380002/)

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Kennedy alleged the harassment started in May 2017. She said that she alerted William Rodriguez, who was then the deputy director of public works, about the problem. She said Rodriguez had union president Michael Jackson try to convince her not to report the harassment.

Rodriguez, who is now the director of the department, declined to comment on the allegations. Jackson said he is the president of the union that represents supervisors, including Maher, not rank-and-file employees like Kennedy. Jackson said he could not do anything on Kennedy's behalf because it would have been a conflict of interest with his role as Maher's union representative.

The lawsuit says the city conducted a disciplinary hearing involving Kennedy's allegations against Maher on Nov. 1, but took no action.

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