



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 26-1901, **Agenda Item #:** 87.

5/28/2026

Posting Language

Approve execution of an agreement settling claims related to the Yogurt Shop criminal cases, in an amount not to exceed \$35 million. The settlement may include claims by Michael James Scott, Robert Springsteen, Forrest Welborn, and the estate, estate administrator, and family of Maurice Pierce. Funding: Funding is available from the Liability Reserve Fund and through the issuance of debt obligations.

Lead Department

City Attorney's Office.

Fiscal Note

Funding is available from the Liability Reserve Fund and through the issuance of debt obligations.

For More Information:

Vasu Behara, Litigation Division Chief at 512-974-2268.

Additional Backup Information:

In December 1991, Eliza Thomas, Jennifer Harbison, Sarah Harbison, and Amy Ayers were murdered in the I Can't Believe It's Yogurt shop on West Anderson Lane. These murders became known as the Yogurt Shop Murders. In 1999, Michael James Scott, Robert Springsteen, Forrest Welborn, and Maurice Pierce were arrested by the Austin Police Department and charged in the murders. Springsteen and Scott were each put on trial by the Travis County District Attorney's Office and convicted of capital murder. Both of these sentences were later reversed, and the charges against each were dropped. The charges against Welborn and Pierce were also subsequently dropped. In September 2025, the Austin Police Department used forensic evidence to identify the true killer as Robert Eugene Brashers. Scott, Springsteen, Welborn, and Pierce's estate approached the City with various federal civil rights claims under 42 U.S.C. 1983 and common law related to their wrongful arrests and convictions. The City engaged in settlement discussions with them and reached an agreement in early May 2026. The proposed settlement resolves all legal claims in exchange for payments totaling \$35 million. This action will authorize the City Manager to execute the proposed settlement agreement.