$10M Lawsuit Filed Against Rockingham County Schools

PETE DELEA Daily News-Record

A former Turner Ashby High School student who was molested by a teacher filed a $10 million lawsuit Thursday against Rockingham County Public Schools and a local toy shop, Timeless Toys, claiming the division failed to prevent and investigate the case.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Harrisonburg, names the plaintiff only as "John Doe."

"Plaintiff Doe was groomed by his high school choir teacher, Defendant Wesley Dunlap, and sexually assaulted on multiple occasions both on and off school grounds," the lawsuit states.

In September, police arrested the teacher, accusing him of having a sexual relationship with a student.

On May 10, Dunlap, 37, of Mount Crawford, pleaded guilty to two felony counts of indecent liberties with a juvenile while in a supervisory capacity.

He received a 10-year sentence with all but two years suspended.

At the time of Dunlap's arrest, Rockingham County Public Schools Superintendent Oskar Scheikl said Dunlap, who had been employed by the school system for more than a decade, resigned at the end of the 2019-20 school year.

On Thursday, Scheikl said the school system hasn't been served with the lawsuit, and he has not seen it.

However, he said, allegations are always handled seriously.

"When we get allegations, we investigate them," he said. "We have very high expectations of our employees."

In addition to being a teacher, Dunlap, according to the lawsuit, was the co-owner of Timeless Toys, a vintage toy store in Harrisonburg.

"Defendant Dunlap sexually assaulted Plaintiff at Timeless Toys, LLC and used the Timeless Toys Instagram account to solicit and receive sexual images of plaintiff and sent plaintiff nude images of himself to plaintiff, who was, during the relevant time, a minor under age 18," the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit states that Dunlap groomed the victim.

"Defendant Dunlap knew that plaintiff did not have a father figure and had difficulty with confidence, feeling loved, and feeling important," the lawsuit states. "Plaintiff began relying on defendant Dunlap as a friend and father-figure and

would discuss family issues, money difficulties at home, and other things going on in his life with him."

The lawsuit states Dunlap's actions left the victim with "severe psychological injuries."

As of Thursday, a trial date has not been set.