

METRO NEWS

RTA, Lakewood woman settle wrongful arrest, excessive force lawsuit

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An RTA train is seen in this January 2015 file photo. The RTA has paid a \$45,000 settlement to a Lakewood woman who sued the transit authority and a former RTA officer after excessive force was used in a 2015 wrongful arrest. (*John Kuntz, cleveland.com*)

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CLEVELAND, Ohio - The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) has paid a \$45,000 settlement to Lakewood woman who accused an RTA police officer of using excessive force in a wrongful 2015 arrest.

The settlement was announced Tuesday night in a news release from the woman's lawyer's office. Jessica Ferrato RTA and the former RTA officer, Jonathan Pacholke, [in February 2016](#).

In the lawsuit, Ferrato claimed that on March 19, 2015, she was leaving the West 117th Street rapid stop when Ferrato slapped her cell phone from her hands, tackled her and shoved her face in the dirt. Ferrato said the situation ended after Pacholke asked to see her fare card two times.

Ferrato claimed she showed the pass twice, but Pacholke denied those claims. Pacholke ran in front of Ferrato exited the station and continued saying, "You have to do what I tell you," her lawsuit stated.

Additional officers who responded that night took Ferrato back to RTA headquarters, where they determined that resisting arrest charges would be filed. Ferrato was cited for disorderly conduct while intoxicated, even though she said she was not drunk during the incident.

Following an internal RTA investigation, the [transit authority released a public apology to Ferrato](#), dropped the disorderly conduct citation and suspended Pacholke.

"A police officer lost his temper when a woman questioned him in a way that he didn't like, but was perfectly legal," Ferrato's attorney Peter Pattakos, of the Chandra Law Firm, said in [a news release](#). "The Constitution protects your right to peacefully disagree with police tactics, and it's always wrong when officers retaliate against such disagreement with violence."

An RTA spokeswoman had no information about the settlement and could not comment when reached Tuesday.

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