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City Moves to Hold Owners of Latitude Five25 Apartments in Contempt for Violating Court Order to Improve Living Conditions at East Side Complex

City Attorney Klein says continued violations run the gamut, from trash and flooding to periods without hot water or electricity—and that the City needed to step in to protect residents

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus filed multiple contempt motions to impose sanctions against Paxe Latitude, the owners of the Latitude Five25 Apartments on the City's east side. The City alleges Paxe Latitude violated multiple terms of a May 2022 order that required the owners to improve security, address code violations and bring the property into compliance.

In recent weeks, residents have endured significant periods without electricity, hot water and elevator service, as well as flooding and accumulation of trash throughout on site. Just this week, electricity service to Latitude Five25 was discontinued due to management nonpayment of utility bills. On multiple occasions, the City has responded to concerns of Latitude Five25 residents by deploying social service providers for assistance, but felt it was time to take further legal action to hold property owners accountable.

“We want to work with property owners to ensure residents have a safe, clean place to call home, but continued violations of the terms of the court order and failing to meet the basic human needs of tenants forced the City to step in to protect residents,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“We will hold any and all landlords accountable for failing to maintain livable conditions for their residents.”**

“Code Enforcement and other city agencies have provided the necessary data and information that has allowed the City Attorney to file these motions. The residents of Latitude Five25, our community members, deserve a safe and clean place to live,” said Scott Messer, Director of Building and Zoning Services Department. **“The city will continue to partner with the City Attorney to do everything possible to force this landlord to provide safe and clean housing for our neighbors.”**

A contempt motion filed by the City in late August alleges Paxe Latitude violated the May 2022 entry, which requires onsite staffing and measures to decrease criminal activity which has plagued the complex in recent years.

According to court documents, the Columbus Fire Department noted that on multiple occasions in recent months, no personnel were on site—a violation of the standing court order. During that same period, CPD received numerous calls for service to the property that involved gun violence.

If found in contempt on these counts, the City is pushing for property owners to be required to produce a contract for security staffing for at least one year, provide proof of current payment accounts for its security staffing provider, and post a bond with the court and pay a fine, both of which would be equal to one month's security services.

The second contempt motion, filed in Sept. 2022, alleges multiple violations of City and State code, including the most recent violation when electric services were cut to the complex as a result of owners' nonpayment of their utility bill. The City cited property owners for violating codes pertaining to safe equipment and facilities, discontinuance of service or facility, and clean and sanitary dwelling.

As a result of these violations, Latitude Five25 tenants have been forced to endure significant periods without electricity, hot water or elevator service, flooding of both water and sewage, and accumulation of trash throughout the interiors of the buildings.

If found in contempt in this second motion, sanctions for property owners could include:

- Being required to produce a maintenance and capital improvement assessment conducted by a third party,
- Being required to produce proof of current payment accounts to all maintenance, utility and service providers,
- Being ordered to post a bond with the court as well as pay a fine both for an amount not less than the total of three months of maintenance, utility and service costs.

Copies of the contempt motions are attached.

[Timestamp Copy of Motion for Contempt 2022 EVH 60061
2022 EVH 060061 - 8 31 2022 - DMOTION - CV Docket - 8 31 2022
2022.09.08 Paxe Latitude Second Motion for Contempt](#)

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