

A Moore County Jury ruled in favor of a Former Taylortown Police Chief who lost his job after participating in a corruption investigation of the town's mayor. Jurors awarded almost half-a-million dollars to Tim Blakely after two days of testimony before Superior Court Judge James Webb. The verdict vindicates Blakely's non-stop efforts to prove that he was fired in 2007 for helping the state bureau of investigation develop charges against Mayor Ulysses Barrett Junior alleging fraud, embezzlement and holding two jobs simultaneously. Although Barrett was eventually cleared of the charges, Blakely blamed him for orchestrating his firing by the town during a five-minute closed door meeting in 2007. In addition, the Taylorotwn Town Council barred Blakely and even members of his family from town property. Blakely is white, Taylortown is a largely African-American community. Blakely's attorney described how upon his client's arrival as chief in 2003, he found a police department in shambles. Boxes of records were stored without labels and the computer system, John Roebuck told the jury, was nonexistent. Over a three-year period, according to his attorney, Blakely personally overhauled disabled patrol cars and even built a computer system from the ground up. He was a merit pay increase each of those years. Upon his dismissal, Blakely told the jury, he was unable to find work as a police chief anywhere and ended up as a police trainer in the Afghanistan War Zone to support his family. In addition to the 483-thousand dollar judgment against Taylortown, the town will be required to pay Blakely up to five years of lost salary. That could amount to another 247-thousand dollars at the court's discretion. Today Judge Webb is hearing motions and briefs filed by attorneys for both sides