

\$895,000 voted to settle case

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A Nassau legislative committee yesterday approved an \$895,000 settlement with a former county human rights commission official who said she was fired because she was black, female and a Republican.

The Rules Committee of the GOP-controlled county legislature voted 4-3 for the settlement with Renaire Frierson, 53, of Freeport, who was dismissed in 2008 during the administration of former Democratic County Executive Thomas Suozzi.

Frierson, a former deputy mayor of Freeport and counsel to the human rights commission before her appointment as executive director in 2001, frequently clashed with Democrats after they took power from Republicans in Nassau in 2002.

Then County Comptroller Howard Weitzman, a Democrat, said oversight of commission staff was so lax that between



Renaire Frierson, right, with attorney Fred Brewington at a legislative committee hearing in 2008

2004 and 2006 most employees were paid for days not worked.

Weitzman criticized Frierson for submitting time sheets showing she was working for the county when she was teaching at Nassau Community College. Frierson said county officials approved her college work.

Suozzi administration officials said in 2008 that Suozzi had nothing to do with the firing, saying the human rights commission had terminated Frierson on an 8-4 vote.

Suozzi had dismissed Frierson nine months after he took of-

fice in 2002, but reversed himself when it was determined that only the commission could hire and fire her. In 2007, Suozzi nominated a new commission, which the legislature approved.

The settlement must be approved by County Executive Edward Mangano, a Republican, and the Nassau Interim Finance Authority, a state monitoring board that controls Nassau's finances.

Neither Frierson nor her attorney, Fred Brewington, of Hempstead, could be reached for comment yesterday. A telephone

message left for NIFA's executive director was not returned. Suozzi, who this year is running in the Democratic primary for county executive, did not return a call for comment.

"Tom Suozzi fired Ms. Frierson twice for improper political reasons and it will now cost taxpayers dearly," County Attorney John Ciampoli said yesterday.

The commission has a 15-member board and is charged with eliminating "discrimination in employment, housing, places of public accommodation and education."