UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

J.F., a minor, by and through her Guardian Ad Litem, LIZ FRANCO, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CITY OF WOODLAKE, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:23-cv-01569-JLT-BAM

ORDER ADOPTING FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PLAINTIFFS' UNOPPOSED *EX PARTE* APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF MINORS' COMPROMISE

(Docs. 36, 37, 40, 41)

J.F. and V.F., minors by and through their parent and guardian *ad litem*, Liz Franco, and M.M., a minor by and through her guardian *ad litem* Jennifer Menendez (collectively, "Plaintiffs"), initiated this action on November 7, 2023. (Doc. 1.) Plaintiffs bring claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and state law seeking compensatory and punitive damages from Defendants City of Woodlake, Chris Kaious, and Juan Gonzales ("Defendants"). (*Id.*) Plaintiffs allege that Defendants violated various rights under the United States Constitution and state law in connection with the fatal officer-involved shooting of Victor Melendez by members of the City of Woodlake Police Department. (*Id.* at 2.) Following notice of settlement, Plaintiffs filed two *Ex Parte* Applications for Approval of Minors' Compromise. (Docs. 36, 37.) The applications were submitted to the assigned magistrate judge for the issuance of findings and recommendations.

On October 24, 2025, the assigned magistrate judge issued findings and recommendations

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regarding Plaintiffs' *Ex Parte* Applications for Approval of the Minors' Compromise (Docs. 36, 37) recommending as follows: (1) Plaintiffs' Motions for Approval of Minors' Compromise (Docs. 36, 37) be GRANTED; and (2) the settlement be APPROVED as fair and reasonable. (Doc. 38.) The Court served the findings and recommendations on all parties and notified them that any objections were due within fourteen (14) days. (Doc. 38 at 13.) On November 3, 2025, Defendants submitted a statement of non-objection. (Doc. 39.)

On November 6, 2025, Plaintiffs filed Amended *Ex Parte* Applications for Approval of Minors' Compromise (the "Amended Applications"). (Docs. 40, 41.) The Amended Applications are substantively identical to the prior Applications (Docs. 36, 37) and are amended primarily to reflect new annuity rates, as the rates submitted in the prior Applications have since expired. (*See* Docs. 40, 41 at 2 n.1.) According to the Declaration of Eric Valenzuela, submitted concurrently with the Amended Applications, the new rates "increase the payments amounts slightly" and would expire on January 12, 2026. (Docs. 40, 41 at 2 n.1.)

In accordance with the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636 (b)(1)(c), this Court has conducted a *de novo* review of the case. Having carefully reviewed the entire file, the court finds that the findings and recommendations are supported by the record and proper analysis. Accordingly the Court **ORDERS**:

1. The findings and recommendations issued on October 24, 2025 (Doc. 38) are ADOPTED;
2. Plaintiffs' *Ex Parte* Applications for Approval of the Minors' Compromise (Docs. 36, 37, 40, 41) are GRANTED; and
3. The settlement is APPROVED as fair and reasonable.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: **November 14, 2025**

Jennifer L. Thurston
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE