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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FEDERAL COURT JURY CLEARS OFFICERS
IN CONNECTION WITH HARBORSIDE MELEE**

HARTFORD, Conn. (Dec. 4, 2012) – A jury in the U.S. District Court sitting in Hartford returned a defendant’s verdict Tuesday in a federal civil rights trial involving three arrests made during a widespread melee at the now closed Harborside Bar in Stratford on September 22, 2007.

In the fight that occurred at approximately 2 a.m., police officers from Stratford, Milford and the Connecticut State Police performed crowd control measures on approximately 1,000 people exiting the club and the surrounding neighborhood.

The three plaintiffs, Narrell Stallworth, Calvin Smalls and Larisse King, were arrested in the adjacent parking lot of Danny's Drive-In. Stallworth sued Stratford Police Officer John Therina, the Town of Stratford and Connecticut State Trooper Paul Comensanas. The other plaintiffs sued Stratford Officers Therina, Sergeant Shawn Martinez, Larry Overby and Sergeant Anthony Rhew and State Trooper Comensanas. Trooper Comensanas was a canine handler.

The case against Sergeant Anthony Rhew was withdrawn prior to trial. During the trial, the plaintiffs withdrew all claims against Officer Overby and Sergeant Martinez.

The plaintiffs claimed that Officer Therina and Trooper Comensanas utilized excessive force in making their arrests.

The federal court jury returned a defendant's verdict in favor of Officer Therina, Trooper Comensanas and the Town of Stratford. U.S. Magistrate Judge Donna Martinez presided over the trial.

The Stratford officers were represented at trial by former Stratford Town Attorney Richard J. Buturla and Warren L. Holcomb, both of the law firm of Berchem Moses & Devlin, P.C., Milford, Connecticut.

Attorney Buturla commented, "We are pleased that the jury verdict vindicated these fine officers. They acted in the best traditions of their departments."

Berchem, Moses & Devlin is a multi-specialty law practice with offices in Milford and Westport. Since 1933, the firm has provided high quality legal services to clients throughout Connecticut. Clients include individuals, small and midsize businesses, government agencies and Fortune 500 companies.