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THURSDAY

Sources: Penn State discussed up to \$80 million in Sandusky settlements

That's how much Penn State officials have considered for Sandusky settlements.

BY PETER HALL

Of The Morning Call

Penn State officials have discussed \$80 million as "an informal target" to settle all claims by more than 30 people who say they were abused by convicted pedophile and former football coach Jerry Sandusky, sources said.

The sources said \$80 million is the upper end of the range Penn State officials discussed as they prepared to extend tentative settlement offers to a majority of the people who have stepped forward claiming to be victims of sexual abuse by the former defensive coordinator.

The board of trustees voted last week to authorize the university's legal team to move forward with settlements totaling about \$60 million, according to a member of the board who spoke to reporters Thursday, although the number of claims that would be resolved remains unclear.

Attorneys who represent some of the men who testified about their abuse during Sandusky's criminal trial and others who stepped forward claiming to be victims since he was charged in November 2011 remained mum Thursday about the amounts their clients are seeking from the university.

But Trustee Ted Brown told The Associated Press and Centre Daily Times in State College that the board authorized settlements totaling about

\$60 million at its meeting July 12. Brown said, however, he did not know how many claims would be resolved.

The Legal Intelligencer in Philadelphia, one of three newspapers that reported the amount in Thursday's editions, said sources put the number of cases in which settlement offers have not been extended at 10 or fewer.

The \$80 million figure was discussed internally as the Penn State officials' preferred limit for settling claims with as many as 32 people, sources said. The university would be unable to place a cap on payouts and would likely be exposed to even larger awards if any of the claims went to trial.

The university has not confirmed the amount, nor has it commented on the settlement discussions. A spokesman for Penn State said last week that the university has pledged to reveal the aggregate amount of the settlements when all of the claims are resolved.

Michael Rozen, who was hired with his partner, Kenneth Feinberg, to mediate the claims, said he expects the current batch of tentative settlements to be completed soon.

Tom Kline, a Philadelphia attorney who represents the man iden-

tified as Victim 5 in court documents, said he has a tentative agreement with Penn State and that he and attorneys for many of the claimants have moved beyond the negotiating phase to work toward formalizing settlements.

"There are now many fewer moving parts than previously existed before the PSU negotiators were authorized by the board to extend formal offers, and we now appear to be close to seeing formal agreements consummated," Kline said in an email.

Kline, however, said he is barred from discussing his client's individual offer.

Philadelphia attorney Slade McLaughlin represents Aaron Fisher, a Clinton County teenager who revealed his identity in a book about his experiences, as well as a number of others who claim they were abused by Sandusky.

McLaughlin said he has not been informed of, nor has he inquired about, the offers extended to claimants other than his clients. He said his negotiations with the university are ongoing and characterized the talks as cooperative and productive.

Sandusky, who helped earn Penn State the nickname Linebacker U., befriended young boys at youth programs organized by his charity for at-risk kids and subjected them to molestation that ranged from unwanted touching to forced oral and anal sex. Some

of the assaults took place on Penn State's campus, while others occurred in his home, hotels and on road trips with the Penn State football team.

Claims against Penn State began to surface about a month after Sandusky was charged, when Jeff Anderson, a St. Paul, Minn., attorney who specializes in clergy abuse claims, sued Sandusky, Penn State and Sandusky's charity, The Second Mile, in Philadelphia County Court.

Since then, five additional lawsuits on behalf of men claiming abuse by Sandusky have been filed in state and federal courts around Pennsylvania. A majority of the claims were taken directly to Penn State.

Immediately following Sandusky's conviction in June 2012, Penn State President Rodney Erickson pledged to "privately, expeditiously and fairly" resolve their claims.

In September, the university hired Rozen and Feinberg, renowned mediators who administered compensation funds for victims of the Sept.

11, 2001, terrorist attacks; the Virginia Tech shootings; and the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

Penn State's costs associated with the Sandusky scandal continue to mount. The university said Thursday it has paid \$46.85 million for lawyers, consultants and other work.

Combined with the settlements authorized last week and a fine imposed by the NCAA, the cost of the scandal soars to \$154.8 million, according to a tally of expenses between November 2011 and April 30 released by the university Thursday.

Sandusky, 69, is serving a 30- to 60-year state prison sentence for molesting 10 young boys that virtually ensures he will spend the rest of his life behind bars.

A hearing on conspiracy, perjury, child endangerment and other charges for three former Penn State administrators is scheduled July 29. Former President Graham Spanier, Vice President Gary Schultz and Athletic Director Tim Curley are accused of hiding Sandusky's crimes to protect the university from scandal.