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## National Arts Club Files Claim Against Ex-Chief

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The National Arts Club is firing back at O. Aldon James, its former president who sued the club after it moved to oust him this summer along with his brother John and a friend, Steven Leitner.

In an amended response to Mr. James's lawsuit, the club has alleged that he is responsible for at least \$1.5 million in lost revenue and \$600,000 of improperly spent funds in the last six years. Mr. James was the president of the club for 25 years, but the statute of limitations allows the club to claim only the last six years of expenses.

Mr. James's lawyer, Adam Gilbert, said: "It is an utterly baseless claim."

The club said the \$1.5 million is related to rent that would have been charged on apartments and additional spaces within the club. Mr. James had access to the club's ATM card and checkbook, and the club claims he misused the money to the tune of \$100,000 each year.

According to the club's lawyer, Roland Riopelle, the details of the expenditures were not included in the first response because Mr. James disrupted the monthly board meeting. "At the time we filed our original answer, the board was being prevented from meeting as a whole," he said. "The board was finally able to meet again in November. The issue of whether the board should include counterclaims was raised and a vote was taken."

—Pia Catton