

Greeley Tribune

Saturday, February 6, 2010

Nunn board fires its town clerk

Rule violation, incompetence cited

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NUNN — The controversy infesting Nunn's town board has claimed another official.

On Thursday night, town clerk, town treasurer and court clerk Tori McMechan was fired after a public hearing that lasted 4 1/2 hours. The hearing featured witnesses accusing McMechan of willfully committing rule violations and incompetence.

On Dec. 28, four new trustees and a new mayor were sworn in following a mass town board recall. Mayor Joe Bagby, who had been elected following the recall and sworn in that night, resigned shortly afterward. Mayor pro tem Tom Bender is serving as the town's mayor until April's upcoming municipal elections.

The root of much of the larger quarrel originated in disagreements about a proposed uranium mine, which have been ongoing for months, but heated up last summer.

According to the notice of hearing served to McMechan on Jan. 29, she was accused of:

» Violating her town treasurer duties by failing to submit the town's audit to the state as required by statute for the past two years, and lying about granted extensions for the audits;

» Violating her town clerk duties by failing to post approved bills and requested documents, posting legal notices with incorrect dates and information, and failing to promptly deliver a town auditor letter to the board;

» Violating her town officer duties by signing recall petitions and acting as hearing officer for the hearings, and changing a trustee's recall response for the recall election.

About 100 people attended the hearing, held in the Nunn community center's gymnasium. The town's population is about 500. Town officials contracted with private security personnel from Fort Collins to keep order during the hearing.

Though McMechan didn't testify during the hearing, she spoke afterward about how she wasn't surprised she lost her job.

“We knew what the outcome would be before we got here” Thursday night, she said. “I'm OK with everything, it'll just take a while to move on.”

She said she'll continue to reside in Nunn.

“I haven't done anything wrong,” she said. “Anybody could make a typographical error.”

Though McMechan said she thought the hearing wasn't conducted fairly, Bender said he felt otherwise, and that his mind hadn't been made up before the hearing.

“I can't speak for anybody else. Mine wasn't,” he said.

Mark Cohen, McMechan's lawyer, said legal action is possible because of the nature of the hearing and the accusations. He said some possible options include a lawsuit against the town, a request to have a court review the decision and the process, and a lawsuit against one or more of the town board members individually.

“I'm not saying that any of that's gonna happen, I'm just saying those are all things that need to be looked at,” he said. “They could have simply let her finish her term and just not re-appoint her (in April), which I think would have made a lot of the legal issues moot.”

McMechan said after the hearing that she was responsible for getting the town more than \$69,000 in grants and has completed several courses pertaining to her position with the town.

Nunn has already posted a part-time town clerk opening, and will soon post a full-time position as well, Bender said.

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