AMASA—The Iron County Board of Commissioners approved the contract presented to the new administrator at its June 26 bi-monthly meeting.

The board, meeting at the Hematite Township Hall, questioned several items in the contract before agreeing to hire Sue Clisch as administrator.

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Clisch said she was satisfied with the contract, with the exception of a clause that requests she report to the board chairman if she calls in a sick day.

"I don't think that's necessary," she said, noting that as long as the executive assistant and the county clerk know, "the office is covered OK."

Commissioner Rosalie King questioned the termination and severance items in the contract.

What if, King asked, following an evaluation in December, either party decides the position isn't working out, could Clisch, who served as administrative assistant prior to applying for the administrator position, return to her former position.

"To go back 'down the ladder,'" said Civil Counsel Steve Tinti, "I've not seen that contract provision drafted for any top administrator in the U.P."

Chairman Wayne Wales told Clisch, "If I were you, I'd want that in the contract.

"You've been warned a new board could replace you."

The board made several typographical changes, noted Clish's request, and authorized the chairman to execute the contract with the noted modifications, effective May 22.

The board approved Clisch receiving professional development training from retired Michigan State University professor Dr. Lynn Harvey, who offers technical assistance to state and local government.

Cost for the training is $2,755, which includes his lodging. There is a fund set up for this, Clisch said.

Lisa Masnova, acting administrative assistant since the beginning of the year, was hired by the board for the position.

in other business:

--The board approved participating in the West-Central U.P. Regional Community Corrections program. Iron County Sheriff Mark Valesano explained it consists of a group of counties from the western U.P. who provide programs for community corrections such as the work vans.

Public Act 511 allows a judge to sentence one day on a work van for every two in jail, Valesano said.

"This reduces the cost of incarceration and provides labor for the community." The program can apply for funding and grants, he added.

--The board considered a request from the Northwoods Animal Shelter to increase its payment to the facility.

Shelter Board President Gerry Berezik told the commission it has been 10 years since the county increased its payment. The shelter receives $1,125 per month.

After the old shelter in Mineral Hills was condemned in 2002, the group moved into its current facility, on Selden Road.

"The utilities have tripled," Berezik said. "You may notice we have air conditioning," she added.

"It's mandated by the state inspector."

The washers and dryers also use a lot of energy, she said.

The only paid employees are the manager, who receives a stipend, and one staff, who works about three hours a day cleaning kennels.

"We can't keep running on a shoestring," she said.

Wales said he was aware of the increasing utility costs.

"Iron River city took a major increase," he said, noting he has a business in the same vicinity, and the utility costs have "gone way up."

He suggested a $400 per month increase to the shelter.

Clisch said she didn't see an issue with the increase, but asked that the board look at the shelter's line items and study their needs.

The commission told Berezik it would respond to her request at the July 24 meeting.

--The board received a request from the Chicaugon Lake Concession to continue with the present vendor for the Pentoga Park store for the next three years.

Clisch said it would have to be bid out. Tinti said there was a difference between bidding out the concession and requesting proposals.

The commission is satisfied with the current operators, he noted, saying, "Good operators will make good proposals."

The board approved running an ad seeking proposals.

--The board approved the county's deficit reduction for the 2011 audit.

The county uses its stabilization fund to cover deficits in various departments, Clisch said. King thought some of the deficits were "pretty serious," and had concerns about using the stabilization fund to cover the $212,000 total.