CRYSTAL FALLS— The Iron County Board of Commissioners voted Feb. 12 to transfer benefits for two employees as a compromise between past practice and contract language.
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Both Joetta Grieg and Melanie Camps had requested release of retirement funds when they moved from hourly union positions to salaried elected posts.
Camps was elected treasurer and Grieg was elected register of deeds in the November 2012 election. Both asked the County Board to continue to payout benefits upon request, as had been the past practice.
But contracts only allow disbursement of benefits upon layoff or retirement.
“We can either follow the past practice or follow the contract and the advice of our labor attorney,” said Commissioner Ray Coates.
Civil counsel Steve Tinti pointed out a compromise of moving the funds from Camps’ and Grieg’s previous retirement plans to their current plans.
The board approved the proposal contingent upon Camps and Grieg dropping union grievances filed while they were still deputy treasurer and treasurer’s accounting clerk, respectively. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Carl Lind absent from the meeting.
The County Board also approved a proposal to reopen discussions between the Iron County Medical Care Facility and NorthStar Health System officials to resume prescription drug discussions despite a signed contract with another provider.
“There a lot of options in Iron County to be explored,” Commissioner Coates told the board.
At issue is a contract between Elder Care, a subsidiary of Specialized Pharmacy, and the Medical Care Facility to provide prescription drugs worth more than $1 million. Previously, the Medical Care Facility had purchased prescription drugs from an Iron River pharmacy.
In December 2012, Medicare Administrator Chester Pinterelli and Human Services Board members told a joint meeting with the County Board and members of the NorthStar board that the decision to switch providers was made in an attempt to save money and maintain compliance with mandated standards.
According to Patti Peretto, county commissioner and former Human Services Board member, “Our mom and pop companies just can’t compete with those big companies.”
A resolution offered by Commissioner James Brennan to resume discussion between the Human Services Board and NorthStar was approved by a 3-1 margin, with Peretto casting the dissenting vote.
The board also passed a motion from Brennan recognizing the West Iron County Public Schools for earning 2011-12 Academic State Championship status. The resolution congratulated the faculty, students, families and administration of the district for ranking 42nd statewide.
The County Board also passed a resolution to conduct regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.