

City attorney decision delayed 2 weeks



Jacqueline Mittelstadt addresses the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Tuesday.

By Kathryn Reed

Jacqueline Mittelstadt on Tuesday may have addressed the City Council for the last time in open session as South Lake Tahoe's city attorney.

The city's legal counsel has been embroiled in a personnel brouhaha ever since she brought to light issues about how much outside legal counsel the city had retained and the bills associated with those alliances.

It was in early September on a 3-2 vote that the council decided to continue with terminating her contract. But specifics about what the council is upset with have not been disclosed.

The locks have been changed and her computer access has been taken away.

Originally the council intended to take up her employment status up in closed session. The previous week Mittelstadt had requested the matter be in closed session with a court recorder or in open session.

Issues about opening meeting laws and attorney-client privilege were brought up yesterday afternoon.

The outcome was that the council will discuss her job status Oct. 20 in closed session with a court recorder.

Patrick Enright, who was hired as assistant city attorney-redevelopment specialist, is the acting city attorney. Enright and Mittelstadt came aboard in June.

Mittelstadt is on paid administrative leave – making more than \$10,000 a month to live in Lake Tahoe. She signed a six-month lease where she is living – so through the end of November.

After the meeting she said she'd like to keep working for the city, recognizing it would be a bit rocky upon her initial return. However, she believes things can be worked out.

The two sides disagree about whether the Employer's Resource Management Association – known as ERMA complaints – need to be resolved before Mittelstadt could be terminated.

One has been filed against Mittelstadt and Enright, and subsequently Mittelstadt has filed one.

An interesting twist is the council agreed to discuss City Manager Dave Jinkens' actions in regards to personnel issues at the next meeting – Oct. 20 – in closed session.