

# South Tahoe council pushes back, makes philosophical stand

By Kathryn Reed

What may have been the most significant discussion at last week's South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting was about a \$1,000 bill.



The lengthy discussion on the consent agenda item about a snowblower at Lake Tahoe Airport and the consultant working on the specs signaled a shift in how these five do business. Rubber-stamping what staff brings to them didn't happen. Making the person prove they worked the hours is new. Chastising staff in public for having the work done without a contract approved by the council is new.

"I'm very troubled by this," Councilwoman Angela Swanson said. "I don't want to see this happen again from any of our departments."

What happened is Airport Director Sherry Miller brought forward a \$20,000 bill from Reinard Brandley for engineering and consulting assistance in the purchase of an airport snowblower. This is twice the amount it was originally expected to be.

The city's portion is \$1,000, with the Federal Aviation Administration picking up 95 percent. But it is all taxpayer money.

In the discussions April 19 it was brought up that the Brandley, who has been associated with the airport before the

city incorporated in 1965, had to re-do the specs for the bid. The city is being billed for his mistakes.

Councilman Tom Davis was adamant he isn't going to agree to pay this bill until he sees an accounting of the work done and hours associated with it.

The blower is expected to arrive this summer, so delaying payment to the consultant is not delaying the item being built.

Miller explained a consultant was needed because the airport via FAA regulations has unique requirements. The \$507,000 blower is being built just for the South Lake Tahoe airport.

It's likely the contract with the consultant will be before the council again at the May 3 meeting.