

EDC leader has history of costing taxpayers

By Kathryn Reed

Pamela Knorr is proving to be a financial liability for her employers – aka the taxpayers. First it was Alpine County, now it is El Dorado County.

On July 3, 2012, Knorr signed a five-year contract to be CAO of Alpine County at a rate of pay of \$11,757 per month. She also received a \$400 a month car allowance and access to the county credit card presumably for county business. The contract said Knorr would be entitled to 18 months severance pay if she were terminated.



Pamela Knorr

She and the board agreed to this even though months earlier she believed the sheriff and county auditor were harassing her.

Knorr on April 11, 2013, filed a claim against the county alleging harassment that dated to April 2012 – three months prior to signing the long-term contract.

Knorr's claim states the Alpine County sheriff initiated a criminal investigation of Knorr in an effort to harass, retaliate and intimidate her. The claim also states that the auditor harassed and retaliated against her and that Knorr

“was subjected to unwanted harassing conduct by men who harassed, attempted to coerce, threatened, intimidated, and discriminated against (her) for being a women in a leadership position.”

The claim says county counsel and the Board of Supervisors in April 2012 were notified of the alleged harassment.

Alpine County and Knorr settled that dispute for \$10,000.

Her last day with Alpine was Aug. 2, 2013. She was paid \$80,145.50 on Aug. 7, 2013, and another \$80,145.50, on July 1, 2014, as severance per the contract.

Janet Dutcher, Alpine County assistant CAO, told *Lake Tahoe News* that Knorr agreed to take less than what the contract called for and to have it split in two payments.

Knorr did not return *Lake Tahoe News*' phone call.

Knorr is not done with Alpine County. A former Alpine County employee who worked for her when she was CAO has sued her. Robert Levy, former undersheriff of Alpine County, in the 19-page lawsuit alleges Knorr along with three supervisors at the time and a private citizen violated his civil rights, conspired to do so, discriminated against him based on age, failed to prevent discrimination and retaliation, violated the Public Safety Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights Act, and defamed him.

“Her theory was a younger, cheaper workforce was better,” Jeanette Viduay, investigator with the Watts Law Office, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Knorr is 44 years old.

She was not unemployed for long. El Dorado County hired her in September 2013 as Human Resources director.

El Dorado County's recruitment for Knorr's position was for

the shortest amount of time allowed by county policy, which is unusual for such an important job. Terri Daly was CAO at the time. Daly and Knorr share a close friend and mentor, Yolo County CAO Patrick Blacklock. Blacklock is the former CAO of Amador County. Daly and Knorr are former Amador County employees.

Daly's employment as El Dorado County CAO was terminated in November 2014. She received a \$150,000 settlement. Knorr replaced Daly as CAO at that time.

As the top official in El Dorado County, Knorr as chief administrative officer is not taking actions to remedy the budget debacle her predecessor, Daly, created. Daly went on a hiring spree, which is the same as a spending spree. Each month the county is spending \$1.3 million more than it is taking in. A \$10 million surplus has been exhausted.

The five members of the Board of Supervisors, who are Knorr's bosses and who earlier this year gave her the one-year contract, have not mandated the spending be stopped. While it is the board's responsibility to set policy and then for Knorr and other staff to carry out the policy, there is a bit of tug-of-war over who has responsibility over the budget. Ultimately, though, it will be the electeds who vote on the budget, so it is their responsibility to OK how much is spent on what.

Brian Veerkamp, chair of the Board of Supervisors, did not return a call.

While Knorr's contract for CAO is for one year, she is also still head of the Human Resources Department. This means that anyone who has an issue with Knorr or others in her department have no recourse. This is the same HR Department that was lambasted this spring by the county grand jury.