

Ex-supervisor wants back pay from EDC

Ron Briggs v. El Dorado County



By Kathryn Reed

Former El Dorado County Supervisor Ron Briggs believes he is owed nearly \$93,000 in back wages.

The claim he filed against the county has been rejected. He expects the formal lawsuit to be processed in the coming months.

Briggs served on the board for eight years, having left in January when the incoming electeds were seated.

He claims that starting in 2000 the Board of Supervisors adopted four resolutions tying the supervisors' rate of pay to what the unions and other electeds received. It wasn't until 2013 that Briggs said he became aware of this.

However, there is an ordinance on the books that says supervisors set their own wages, that it must be heard twice in public – as is the norm for all ordinances.

Supervisors receive about \$76,000 a year, plus benefits. Briggs contends had the raises occurred, he would have been making – as would the current board – closer to \$93,000

annually.

“Ron Briggs was paid the same as every other county supervisor and in accordance with the rules and direction established by the Board of Supervisors before Ron took office,” Joe Harn, county auditor-controller, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Ron never complained to my office about his salary while he was in office for eight years.”

The county has hired outside legal counsel to deal with the threat of litigation. Through May, about \$12,000 has been spent. That number could skyrocket if a prolonged court case ensues.

“Ron’s threatened litigation against the county is another waste of the public’s money,” Harn said.

State law allows Briggs to seek three year’s worth of wages. That is how the \$92,346.84 was derived.

“To tell the county counsel and CAO I need a pay increase ... it was uncomfortable. I waited until I got out,” Briggs told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Briggs said in 2013 he was in favor of reducing how other electeds were paid. So much so that he and other supes cut the pay of the sheriff, auditor and others.

(However, none of the supervisors broached the subject of reducing their own pay.)

In November 2014, after the election, supervisors voted 3-2 to restore the pay. Briggs and Supervisor Shiva Frentzen were it the minority. The majority believed the electeds should make more than the subordinates. Without restoring the pay, this would not have been the case.

Briggs said, “It’s an out of hand pay system the county has for its electeds. The reason why salaries and benefits keep rising and rising is because we keep firing all our department

heads. Every time you raise department heads' pay it affects the entire organizational chart. Every time an elected gets a pay raise, then the second and third (in charge) wants a raise and it gets out of control."

The potential litigation, he said, is his way to make the point that the pay structure as it relates to elected officials in the county needs revamping.