

County reps try to stop borrowing

Rodeschin walks out; no vote without a quorum

By AARON ALDRIDGE
Staff Writer

A attempt to suspend any further borrowing by Sullivan County led to a delegate walking out during the fourth installment of a special delegation meeting that began on May 14.

"The only way to stop that motion from passing was to walk out," Rep. Beverly

Rodeschin, R-Newport, said after the meeting on Monday. "I do not want my county going bankrupt."

Ellen Nielsen, D-Claremont, proposed a motion, "that the executive finance committee not approve any borrowing for fiscal '08 at this time."

The motion came on the heels of a request by county treasurer Cynthia Sweeney to borrow \$8 million in revenue anticipation notes for the next fiscal year.

"We need to know what's coming in and what we have to spend," Nielsen said.

Rodeschin said she was concerned that if the motion passed, the county may not be able to pay its bills in the new fiscal year, which begins July 1.

"My concern is, what will this do to the county?" Rodeschin asked. "Do we just close the county?"

Nielsen responded and said she had no intention of closing the county.

"My motion does not say shut the county down," Nielsen said.

When Rodeschin left the meeting there were not enough delegates for a quorum so a vote on Nielsen's motion could not take place. Seven of the 13 state reps from Sullivan County are needed for a quorum.

"I'm not in favor of this motion and I'm leaving," Rodeschin said on her way out. "We're micromanaging the county and we're micromanaging the treasurer."

Rep. Larry Converse, D-Claremont, asked chairman Peter Franklin, D-

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Newport, if he should call the sheriff and have Rodeschin brought back into the meeting. Franklin declined the offer.

"We don't know what's going on with the budget," Nielsen said. "It may call for micromanaging."

Commissioner Jeff Barrette said he does not want the county to go into bankruptcy or not pay county employees.

"The delegation does not want that either," Barrette said.

According to Barrette, when the new fiscal year begins on July 1, the county will need to borrow money to pay bills until tax revenue is received later in the year. The county does not receive any tax money from the towns until December and relies on the loan for expenses.

"We will need to ask for a TAN (tax anticipation note) and explain this to the delegates," Barrette said.

When asked how the county would pay its bills if the delegation refused the loan, Barrette said that was not an option.

"We still have our obligations," Barrette said.

The meeting continued for another two hours

while Franklin asked county accountant Jeff Graham questions about the status of the current year's budget.

According to Graham, the county should have a surplus of about \$500,000 by the end of the current fiscal year on June 30.

Sullivan County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio, who refused to attend the meeting, said he has estimated the budget will show a surplus between \$300,000 and \$600,000 by the end of the year.

Franklin continued the meeting until next week, but did not give a specific date, time or place.

A public hearing on the proposed county budget will take place tonight at 7 in the business and community room at the Claremont Technical Center. Prior to the meeting the commissioners will meet at 5:30 to review the borrowing request by the treasurer. At 6 p.m. the treasurer, finance committee and commissioners will meet regarding borrowing.

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