

09/11/2008

Accountants quit in Milan

By: Erikah Haavie , Correspondent

MILAN - The Town of Milan will soon be losing its accountants, the second time an accounting firm has resigned from the town in a period of five months, the town supervisor said Monday night.

Supervisor Richard Barrett read a letter during Monday's regular town board meeting from D'Achille and Associates, Rae D'Achille and Mark Pozniak, announcing that the firm would be terminating its contract with the Town of Milan as of Oct. 31. The letter was received by the town on Aug. 26 and the resignation accepted Monday.

D'Achille, also a Milan resident, and Pozniak, have recommended a number of changes to town accounting policy and procedure in recent months.

D'Achille presented the results of an independent audit during a town board meeting in April, after taking a look at finances in the town's various departments, including the planning and zoning department, the supervisor's books and records, the town clerk and the highway department. Faced with a tight budget year, she had encouraged the town to keep a tight watch on its general and escrow funds and improve its record-keeping practices.

The letter read by Barrett did not discuss a reason for the termination of the contract.

"That's a surprise," Town Board Member Ross Williams said upon hearing about the resignation.

"It's going to be tough," especially with budget time coming, Barrett said, adding that D'Achille had offered to provide the names of other reputable firms who might be willing to assist the town.

The town board also approved a resolution to spend up to \$350 to advertise for a new bookkeeper and accountant. Earlier during the meeting, board members approved the purchase of new accounting software for \$2,285, which will be reimbursed from Sen. Vincent Leibell's office.

Barrett said the town has budgeted \$1,400 per month for accounting services, not enough to get the work done.

"It's more than a one-day-a-week job," said board member Bobbi Egan.

"We have a serious problem here," Barrett said. "We're going to have to address it."

In other board business, Town Highway Superintendent Glenn Butler said work on the Old Mill Road Bridge is complete. The Pink Road bridge is virtually complete and is scheduled to be done by the end of the week.

The Town also voted 4-1 to approve a \$10,256 grant to the 2008 state Justice Court Assistance Program through Town Justice Kenneth Kreminick. The grant would cover the costs of purchasing additional file cabinets and constructing a jury box for the court room.

Trustee Bobbi Egan was the lone no vote. Since there haven't been jury trials held recently, "I just question the need for it," she said.

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