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**Valle Ambulance calls 'do-over' meeting**

**By Peggy Scott  
For the Leader**

**T**he Valle Ambulance District board will "redo" its June 23 meeting, after an attorney employed by the district agreed with two board members that a vote to approve a union contract took place during an illegal meeting.

Board president Steve Bergner has called a special meeting for 6 p.m. Thursday, July 15, to take new votes on all June 23 board actions. The special meeting is open to the public.

"We are going to redo the entire meeting from June, including the union contract, to make sure everything conforms with the Sunshine Law and Robert's Rules of Order," Bergner said Tuesday.

Bergner said he thinks the June 23 meeting was conducted legally, but has called the special meeting so there will be no questions.

The vote to ratify the union contract came after two board members, Becky Lowry and Linda Henry, walked out of the June 23 meeting. In order to have a quorum, the board called in an absent board member. Lowry and Henry maintained afterward that it was illegal for the board to re-establish a quorum and continue the meeting.

Henry contacted attorney Frank E. Foster, an expert in emergency medical services law whom the district has on retainer, and asked for his opinion.

Foster agreed that the June 23 meet-

ing ended when a quorum no longer existed, and that the board violated the Sunshine Law, Missouri's open meetings law, and Robert's Rules of Order.

The vote to ratify the union contract was 4-0, with Bergner, Larry Cain, Carey Manning and Tammie Scullin in favor.

Scullin did not attend the meeting originally because of a work conflict. But Bergner called her after Lowry and Henry left, and she agreed to come. The meeting resumed when Scullin arrived about 45 minutes after Bergner's call.

The board then approved the union contract, which had been under discussion off and on over 12 years, and took several other routine votes.

Foster said that when Scullin was called in to make a quorum, that consti-

tuted a new meeting, and a new meeting requires a new notice of the meeting to be posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

"Any action taken without proper notice would be a violation of the Sunshine Law," Foster said.

Foster said the board's action also violated Robert's Rules of Order, which states: "Whenever during the meeting there is found not to be a quorum present, the only thing to be done is to adjourn - though if no question is raised about it, the debate can be continued, but no vote taken, except to adjourn."

However, Bergner said the meeting was recessed while waiting for Scullin to arrive.

"If the meeting was never adjourned because they walked out, I don't see where the meeting ever ended," Bergner said. "We had an attorney at the meeting, and I consulted with the attorney and we went ahead with the meeting (by calling in Scullin)."

Attorney Jason Cordes, with the Wegmann, Stewart, Tesreau, Sherman, Eden and Mikale law firm of Hillsboro, attended the board meeting. An attorney with the local firm routinely attends board meetings. Attorney Foster did not attend the meeting.

Lowry said she left the meeting early when it became clear that her vote wouldn't change the outcome of the contract decision. She said she planned to leave the meeting early because she was leaving for a trip.

"I just feel like we need to go back and redo anything they did in that meeting," Lowry said. "Once Linda left and they didn't have a quorum, I thought it wasn't a legal meeting."

Lowry said she also thought the board had agreed to consider major decisions only when the full board was in attendance.

Henry said she also wants the board to reconsider the union contract.

"I know it's going to pass," she said. "But at least we will do it right. The way it was done was wrong."

"We've been working on this for more than 10 years. One more month wasn't going to hurt."

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