

# Settlement pending in bias suit against township, supervisors

By RONALD BARTIZEK  
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — The supervisors agreed at their Oct. 13 meeting to accept a settlement in the discrimination suit filed by township clerk Kathleen Sebastian against the township and Supervisors Paul Sabol, J. Carl Goodwin, John Versari and Cornelius Allen.

Terms were not announced because all parties to the suit have not yet signed the agreement. But Sebastian said after the meeting that she expected a final settlement soon. Once the agreement is completed, the terms will be made available to the public.

"I'm very glad it's over," she said. "It's been three long years."

In the suit, filed Oct. 21, 2003, Sebastian stated she was appointed acting township manager in Oct. 2001 after the previous manager, Jeffrey Box, resigned. Prior to the appointment she served as assistant township manager, a post she said she was given two weeks after first being hired in 1999.

While working as acting township manager, she applied for the township manager position and was interviewed for the post. She said that after her

interview supervisors changed the qualifications so she would not be able to apply, according to her suit.

During the application and selection process, Sebastian claims, Sabol made discriminatory comments about her, including comments about her marital status, whether there would be a problem between her and single men if she were appointed to the position and about the way she dressed.

The supervisors appointed Edmund O'Neill as township manager in May 2002 and Sebastian returned to the post of assistant manager.

She was later demoted to township clerk.

In the suit, Sebastian sought lost wages and benefits, plus interest. She also sought damages resulting from humiliation, embarrassment and emotional distress.

Sabol and Goodwin are still on the board of supervisors. Versari and Allen lost their seats in the November 2003 election, and Box was elected to the board then.

Sebastian said Wednesday that she would continue to work for the township.

"I like my job, I always have. If I didn't, I would not have stayed."

## Political sign regs won't be enforced

By RONALD BARTIZEK  
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — There is still a township ordinance governing posting political signs, but it will not be enforced.

After discussing options at their Oct. 13 meeting that included repealing portions of the ordinance, the supervisors decided to take the advice of solicitor Ben Jones III and suspend enforcement until Jones can research a possible alternative.

Supervisor Carl Goodwin first made a motion to repeal the requirement that individuals obtain a permit to display a campaign sign, but retain the rest of the ordinance. Jones noted that at least five provisions of the law could be challenged, and also cautioned that it would take several months to do the research.

Chairman Chris Yankovich asked if time limits, which now limit display to a period 30 days before until 10 days after an election, could be retained. Jones said those types of restrictions had been struck down in other cases.

After more discussion, the

supervisors voted unanimously to suspend enforcement of the ordinance, and to remove signs only if they are placed on township property or create a safety hazard.

In other business, the supervisors:

- Voted 5-0 to appoint Carver & Associates to audit the 2004 financial statements, at a cost of \$4,300. The price was \$1,700 less than the next nearest bid.

- Voted unanimously to change carriers for township employees' life, accident and disability insurance from Principal Financial Group to Harleysville Life Insurance. Township Manager Eddie O'Neill said the switch would save more than \$8,000 per year.

- Authorized O'Neill to have a tree at 130 Mount Airy Road removed because it represents a safety hazard. "I'm worried about it falling on the children waiting there for the school bus," Jones said in recommending the action, which will cost up to \$1,200. The township is taking responsibility because more than half of the tree's base is on township right-of-way.



## Getting down and dirty

In photo above, Mike Goldsmith, a member of Kingston Township road crew, finds himself in the middle of Harris Hill Road while repairing a storm sewer. At right, Goldsmith helps maneuver a replacement piece into place.

FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



## GRIFFITHS

(continued from page 1)

some saw as attempts to reduce the superintendent's power, including changing the hiring policy.

Asked if he was leaving because of souring board relations, Griffiths replied: "Let's just say that when you start looking for educational opportunities, you do it at a time and a place when it's a necessity."

Griffiths said that when he notified the board of his plans to retire, it offered him a three-year contract extension, but "that was after the fact."

He enjoyed strong support from some board members and from many parents, who praised the success of the district during his tenure, including consistently high state test scores. Some of those who thanked him after the meeting did so with tears in their eyes.

Griffiths joined Dallas 18

years ago as middle school principal. Four years later he became assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. In December 1996, then-Superintendent Gerald Wycallis became too ill to work, and Griffiths assumed his daily duties.

Wycallis died Jan. 18, 1997, and the board tabbed Griffiths as acting superintendent beginning that February. Two months later Griffiths got a four-year contract as superintendent that began May 1, 1997. That contract was later renewed through June 2005.

He oversaw sweeping changes in curriculum, including the introduction of "block scheduling" that doubled the time students spend in a single class to 82 minutes a day. Most recently he helped in the adoption of customized English lit-

erature books in the high school.

The district also conducted extensive construction and renovation projects at the elementary and middle schools during his tenure, often with some sharp debate among board

members regarding the cost and quality of work.

A special audit commissioned by some members of the board earlier this year put some of the blame for cost overruns on Griffiths' office, a contention he disputed.

## SENIOR MENUS

Senior Citizens Centers sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties offers hot noon meals Monday through Friday to people 60 years of age or older. Donations from participants are gratefully accepted and needed in order to expand this program. The following is the menu for the week of Oct. 18-22. All menus include margarine, milk and coffee. The Senior Center is located at 22 Rice St., Dallas.

MONDAY: Baked chicken,

sweet potatoes, vanilla wafers.

TUESDAY: Baked ham with pineapple sauce, scalloped potatoes, peas and carrots, orange sections.

WEDNESDAY: Stuffed cabbage, parsley boiled potatoes, green beans, apple sauce.

THURSDAY: Roast pork, whipped potatoes, Roman vegetable medley, brownie.

FRIDAY: Roast turkey on sandwich roll, three bean salad, chicken noodle soup, vanilla ice cream.

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