

## Manager, commissioner clash over agenda

**By Billy Ball**  
**Dec 19, 2008**

MONROE - With the change in leadership comes a change in leadership style.

Union Board of Commissioners Vice Chairwoman Kim Rogers, who was sworn in less than a month ago, butted heads Monday, at least in a minor way, with County Manager Al Greene over commissioners' agendas.

Monday's meeting included several contentious items regarding district representation and whether to clear and reappoint two county advisory boards.

Greene, hired this summer to replace fired county manager Mike Shalati, said he regularly includes county staff's recommendation on the items, but Rogers took issue with Greene publicizing his views on such highly charged political topics.

County managers "have to stay out of political discussions," Rogers said Thursday. "They cannot get into the political level and show favor, one side or the other."

Most agenda items are followed by a note reading "Requested Action," without identifying the board member who called for each item.

On Monday, item 21, "Proposed Amendments to Land Use Ordinance to Reconstitute the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment," was followed with two notes. The first, labeled "chairman's recommended action," read "Initiate amendments to the Land Use Ordinance, direct attorney to prepare amendments, and forward to the Planning Board." The second, labeled "staff's recommended action," read "Deny approval of proposed amendments."

"The political nature of the issue is not relevant to my recommendation," Greene said Thursday. "My recommendation is based on what I believe is in the best interest of the county."

Since June, only one other agenda has included recommendations from staff. On Nov. 17, a consent agenda item included a staff recommendation against a request for a penalty waiver. No other agenda this year has listed staff recommendations, although those recommendations are included in supporting documents included with the commissioners' agenda packets.

Rogers urged Greene to remove the recommendations from the agenda, at least when it comes to controversial topics that don't fall under the authority of the county manager.

Greene agreed to remove the portion of the agenda, although he assured commissioners that his stance was known.

County managers typically enforce commissioners' actions and oversee county staff.

In this case, Rogers said, Greene might have overstepped his authority.

"They weren't affecting his staff," she said.

Greene said Friday that he could not recall such a discussion during the meeting.

"I have no friction with Kim Rogers," Greene said. "And if there was, I certainly wouldn't talk about it."

County spokesman Brett Vines said Monday's discussion was a one-time incident, not indicative of a split in commissioner-manager relations.

It wouldn't be the first time a county manager has clashed with the board.

Commissioners fired Shalati two years ago after a number of disputes, some public and some private, over his management style regarding county growth.

Rogers said she don't think it'll be a major debate in her four years on the board.

"It's a thin line you walk between getting into county politics and what he considers his business," she said. "...I don't think it's tension. I think we need to figure out where those lines are and we'll be fine."

&lt;i&gt; Billy Ball can be reached at 704-261-2226 or via e-mail at bball@theej.com. &lt;/i&gt;

© 2008 by *The Enquirer Journal*. All rights reserved.