

Lake Caretaker Position Cut In Atchison Co

**(KAIR)--A long discussed change for the Atchison County Lake comes to fruition this week with the termination of the County Lake Caretakers.**

**That action happened during Tuesday's meeting of the Atchison County Commission.**

**The issue has long been under consideration, and was the subject of an exchange of emails in June of last year by Commissioners Bill Pohl and Eric Noll that were the focus of an alleged open meetings violation.**

**When discussed at that time, Commissioner Noll, in response to Commissioner Pohl, said he liked the idea of doing away with the caretaker position, and that "maybe we get through election, we sell it?"**

**The Kansas Attorney General's office, in March, ruled there was no violation, partly because no binding action was taken on the issue.**

**Now, that binding action happens, with caretakers Dennis and Gail Statler removed from the position.**

**The decision reached at Tuesday's meeting, as expressed at the session by Commission Chairman Noll, was that care taking of the location be taken over by the County Road and Bridge Department. "We're kind of discussing taking the County Lake maintenance in a different direction," Noll said. "Considering getting rid of the caretaker positions and have the maintenance done by road & bridge."**

**Commissioner Jeff Schuele was absent from the meeting. "I didn't know that Mr. Schuele was going to be gone," Noll said. "I had kinda put this on the agenda today so I'm the one who called for it—like I said, I didn't know he was going to be gone."**

**Gail Statler was present, and spoke prior to a formal decision being reached. "A lot of concerns people had is, parties will be back out there, tearing it up," Statler said. "That's one of the things commissioners wanted us to get rid of when we came out there."**

**Among the factors cited in eliminating the position was cost savings. "The declining use of the lake, we're getting to that point where we're trying to save money and as the use declines, it's a tough call to make," Noll said.**

**Ultimately, Noll and Pohl voted to terminate the caretaker position, with the job responsibilities ending immediately.**

**The Statlers, as part of the agreement, were provided with 60 days of pay, 60 days of benefits, and 60 days to relocate from the caretaker's home at the lake.**

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