

Murphy claims authority

Exec, board clash over lawyer's appointment

By Susie Rollins Singer
staff writer

Oakland County's legislative body, the Board of Commissioners, may find itself in a classic legal battle with County Executive Daniel T. Murphy over the appointment of a new county civil counsel.

Both commissioners and Murphy claim the right to make the appointment.

"Nothing gives you the right to hire civil counsel," Murphy told Republican commissioners at a Monday caucus.

"If you persist on this, I will be in court within two days asking for a declaratory judgment. Public Act 139 says I shall have that appoint-

ment, and I'm going to do it. Civil counsel defends everyone in the county. Therefore, the person should come under me."

THE ARGUMENT arose after current civil counsel Robert Allen submitted his resignation earlier this month.

Allen will leave Feb. 16 to enter private legal practice.

He was appointed by the county board years before Oakland voters in 1974 adopted the unified executive form of government.

Now, operating under the Act 139, Murphy said, it is the right of the executive to do hire the civil lawyer.

"If the commissioners want to hire their own counselor or parliamentarian, then that's fine. But civil counsel is mine," Murphy said.

Murphy was responding to a request from board Chairman Richard Wilcox, R-Ortonville, to set up a search committee to locate a new civil counsel.

"MAYBE THE best thing to do is go to court and have a declaratory judgment issued," said Commissioner John J. McDonald, R-Farmington Hills, a lawyer who usually supports the executive in political battles.

"I agree that the civil counsel should be in the executive's department, but it seems that

we're in limbo about what to do," said McDonald.

Commissioner Anne Hobart, R-Waterford, cautioned her colleagues to work together, suggesting that who should do the hiring should be addressed by the commission's general government committee.

Murphy agreed to wait until he receives a report from the general government committee regarding the jurisdiction of the appointment before going to court.

The board is expected to set a date for the first general operating meeting at its regular meeting today (Thursday).



Dennis Murphy out of politics

Commissioner Murphy resigns

Oakland County Commissioner Dennis Murphy, R-Nowi, will resign effective Jan. 31.

At the Republican caucus Monday, Murphy asked that John Calandro of Northville be appointed to fill his vacancy.

Murphy, who has been on the board three terms, said a business promotion has made it difficult for him to devote enough time on the county commission.

"Fourteen months ago, I received a major promotion where I work, and it involves more time. I see I can't do both jobs and do them well," said Murphy, a senior vice president at Bank of the Commonwealth.

CALANDRO, 35, is a division manager for industrial relations for the No Sag Spring Division of Lear, Seigier Inc.

He has been active in the Republican party since the early 1960s. He was a member of the Young Republicans Club, and is a current member of the Northville and Novi Republicans clubs.

His appointment will give him the advantage of running as the incumbent in both August primary and November general elections.

Calandro would represent the 24th District, which includes northwestern Farmington Hills, part of Northville, Novi, Wixom, South Lyon and Lyon Township, until reappointment. The new district is expected to look much the same.

IN THE LAST year, Murphy chaired the

board's finance committee, through which all appropriations pass.

He said he wanted to remain on the board until the 1982 budget was adopted and the reappointment project was completed.

"Since both of those have been done, I'm ready to step down," he said.

Murphy's term expires Dec. 31, 1982, when the entire board must run for reelection.

The board majority makes appointments to fill vacancies. Majority Republicans routinely can be expected to appoint another Republican. The GOP caucus Monday approved Murphy's suggestion of Calandro, and the matter is expected to come officially before the full board today.

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