

# Prosecutor calls allegations 'baseless'

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

In a rare public appearance, Oakland prosecutor Richard Thompson told county commissioners that accusations of "political corruption" within his office are the baseless allegations of a disgruntled employee.

Furthermore, the Michigan Attorney General — who some critics have asked to investigate the prosecutor's office — is already involved in the ongoing investigations, Thompson told commissioners Thursday at the regular meeting of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

If anybody wants the attorney general to intervene, my office will be happy to provide the address and phone number of the Lansing office, Thompson said.

## Defends investigation

The prosecutor defended the way his office is handling the on-

going investigation into two separate areas of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department — and promised to continue operating the office as he has.

Borrowing an 1840s quote from anti-slavery publisher William Lloyd Garrison, Thompson said, "I shall not retreat a single inch."

His 16-minute address to the board of commissioners was prompted, he said, by allegations from James Marcinkowski, a former assistant and confidante, who resigned June 25. Within a week, Marcinkowski told commissioners Thompson's handling of the sheriff's investigation has been tainted by "political corruption."

Thompson has not made many public appearances to talk about the sheriff's investigation lately, choosing instead to allow chief assistant Gerald D. Polson to be the office spokesman.

The prosecutor said he felt

compelled to address the board about the allegations personally because of Marcinkowski. "He chose this forum," the prosecutor said. "And I'm responding in kind."

Mr. Marcinkowski would have commissioners believe he was appalled by the tactics used during the sheriff's investigation and resigned because of them, Thompson said. "In fact he was not involved in that investigation."

## Mixed reactions

Thompson's comments were welcomed and applauded — by some commissioners.

"I accept his (Thompson's) explanation," said commissioner Marilyn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills. "And I support his position."

Other commissioners, including Republicans, weren't as enthusiastic.

"I think he protests too much,"

said commissioner Nancy Dingeldy, R-Wixom, who represents a portion of West Bloomfield.

Commissioner Kevin A. Milner, R-Waterford, whose district also ventures into West Bloomfield, said he appreciated the prosecutor taking time to address commissioners. "But I'd like to see greater communication."

Commissioner David L. Moffitt, R-Farmington Hills, was somewhat critical because Thompson was accompanied by four assistant prosecutors who each addressed the board with high praise for his boss.

"How many people does it take to deliver a message like that?" asked Moffitt. "I'd rather they were back in the office."

Possibly the biggest — and most important — endorsement of the prosecutor's position, however, came from commissioner Larry P. Crake, R-Waterford, who is chairman of the county board.

Despite emotional statements by a disgruntled former employee with questionable motives, Crake said in a letter released after the prosecutor addressed the board, "there has been no evidence of any corruption or improper activity on the part of the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office."

Voters clearly like Richard Thompson's tough policies and have twice elected him to office, Crake said in the letter.

"I will not call for an investigation into the baseless allegations of improper conduct leveled against Prosecutor Thompson," Crake said. "If you believe there is need for further investigation (into the prosecutor's office), contact the Attorney General."

Crake's letter was addressed to Donald F. Tucker, a Birmingham lawyer who has asked for an investigation as well as the prosecutor's resignation. Tucker is chairman of the Oakland County Democratic Party.

# County: Lansing's risking mental health pact

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

Less than two months after signing an agreement with the state, Oakland County commissioners say they are ready to scrap the so-called full management mental health contract unless legislators rescind a measure approved by the House last week.

That measure — requiring services to be provided through the Macomb-Oakland Regional Center, MORC, — is scheduled to again be discussed this week in Lansing. "It's on the Senate calendar," said Joseph Mullen, the county board's legislative agent. "Hopefully we can kill it."

If legislators don't kill — or change — the measure, commissioners said they will.

That was the consensus of opinion at Thursday's regular county board meeting, at which commissioners suspended the

rules so they could more quickly address what they describe as a serious problem.

"I say we cancel the contract," said commissioner Donald W. Jensen, R-Birmingham. They (state representatives) are trying to negate the whole idea of full management.

Commissioner Donn L. Wolf, R-Farmington Hills, expressed similar sentiments. "I've been opposed to it (full management) all along because of something like this. I just don't trust the state."

Republicans weren't the only ones dismayed by the legislation introduced by two Democratic state representatives and approved by a voice vote.

"I don't know why they are doing this," commissioner Lillian Jaffe Oaks, D-Southfield, said in caucus. "Why didn't they (Oakland legislators) contact us?"

Causing the uproar is a bill in-

troduced by state representatives David M. Gubow of Huntington Woods and Charles J. Harrison Jr., Pontiac.

It has several provisions, but the most upsetting as far as Oakland commissioners are concerned is the stipulation that mental health services be provided through MORC.

But commissioners don't necessarily have anything against MORC, said commissioner Shelley Goodman Taub, R-Bloomfield Hills. The county will probably continue providing services through that agency for some time.

But commissioners don't want legislation that would hinder the initial reason Oakland opted for full management, said Taub, who is also a member of the Community Mental Health Board.

Taub and others are concerned that being compelled to provide services through MORC — rather

than taking competitive bids — might preclude contracts with more flexible and/or less expensive agencies.

"That was the reason we went to full management in the first place," said commissioner Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloomfield.

At its May 27 meeting, the board approved a contract with the Michigan Department of Mental Health under which Oakland would micro-manage services provided to as many as 100,000 residents suffering from some form of mental disability.

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