

Avalanche of lawsuits greets interim counsel

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Sara DeKay has been appointed interim Calaveras County counsel, replacing Megan Stedtfeld who recently resigned the post to accept the position of assistant county counsel in Yolo County.

DeKay's appointment was made official Tuesday morning as the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution memorializing the decision.

DeKay has worked as deputy county counsel for Calaveras the past 3 ½ years. She received her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. She will oversee the county counsel office during what is expected to be a three-to six-month recruitment process seeking a permanent replacement.

Her hourly rate of pay will be \$74.40 until the permanent county counsel is appointed.

DeKay inherits a quickly expanding caseload against the county.

The board at Tuesday's meeting voted to retain the legal counsel of Remy, Moose and Manley to defend the county in two recently filed cases. Remy, Moose and Manley is a law firm out of Sacramento specializing in California environmental and land use law. The firm will represent the county against Calaveras Residents Against Commercial Marijuana and the Calaveras Planning Coalition.

The week before, the board voted to increase an expenditure of up to \$170,000 for ongoing legal representation in a \$16.3 million class action complaint filed by Andrew Greer, Golden State Herb Inc. and Adam Ray stemming from the commercial cannabis urgency ordinance and Measure C taxes. The county in that case is being represented by Colantuono, Highsmith, Whatley, PC, out of Grass Valley.

Calaveras Residents Against Commercial Marijuana, an unincorporated group of citizens residing in the county, is seeking to overturn the board's Oct.22 vote adopting an ordinance giving the green light for commercial cannabis production in the county.

The Calaveras Planning Coalition claims the recently approved Calaveras County General Plan Update is incomplete and violates state planning laws.

In another personal matter Tuesday, Kathryn Gomes was appointed county auditor-controller. She replaces Rebecca Lynn Callen who left elected office in September and then in October accepted a position with the Calaveras County Water District.

Gomes will serve the remainder of the term of office through the end of 2022.

Gomes has been working for the county since 1989, most recently as the interim auditor-controller. A screening committee unanimously selected her as the top candidate after a national recruitment search. The board voted unanimously on the appointment.