

SEC Board vacates Holcomb's post

By John Larson — El Defensor Chieftain Staff Writer Oct 4, 2018 Updated 12 hrs ago

Socorro Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees will be needing a new trustee for District II, the general area west of the city of Socorro, including Magdalena and Alamo. The sitting trustee for District II, Judith Holcomb, tendered her letter of resignation during executive session of the board's September 26 meeting.

What was discussed in executive session, as well as the reason for Holcomb's resignation has not been made public.

Coming out of executive session Board President Anne Dorough of District V called for a motion to accept Holcomb's resignation. In a subsequent discussion, District III Trustee Donald Wolberg pointed out that there was a question concerning Holcomb's residence.

"The bylaws require that there be a district representative," Wolberg said. "She does not live (in District II). I don't know how long she has not lived there. It would be wrong for the district not to have a person who lives there representing the district. And she doesn't live there."

The matter of Holcomb's residence stems from a fire that destroyed her Magdalena home in November, 2017.

However, a majority vote showed that the board did not want Holcomb to resign. The motion to accept Holcomb's resignation failed on a 3-2 vote, with Holcomb abstaining.

Wolberg said he was concerned that bylaws were not being followed in not accepting the resignation.

"I think the district is not being taken care of, according to our bylaws," Wolberg said. "This is a matter of ethics. This is a matter of bylaws. And we cannot change the bylaws to please anybody."

Dorough then called for a vote to vacate the seat.

SEC Bylaw 5.09 stipulates a trustee's seat "shall be declared vacant by the remaining members of the Board," in this case, upon the loss of Holcomb's eligibility to continue as trustee.

"Do I have a motion to defer her seat to be vacant, as recommended by the Ethics Committee?"

Dorough said, adding that the "bylaws cannot be suspended. If the bylaws say that a trustee has to live in the district, the trustee has to live in the district. We can't suspend the bylaws. So, as a board if you do not vote to declare the seat vacant you are also in violation of the bylaws."

The motion to declare her seat vacant passed with three yes votes to one no vote; and 1 abstention from Holcomb.

With Holcomb's seat declared vacant, the board will have to decide whether to appoint a replacement or put the position up for a special election.

Holcomb's term still has another 18 months remaining. That District II seat is due for election in April, 2020.

The 2019 Election in April will be for Trustees from District I, District IV and District V. Those seats are currently held by Mary Baca, Dave Wade and Dorough, respectively.

The next board meeting is at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 24

