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OBITUARIES/LOCAL

Salary board OKs employee to take on filing assignment

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HOLLIDAYSBURG — Blair County could get a chance to throw out some old court records.

After a couple of decades of judicial records piling up and being boxed, the state is about to come down with rules on what to do with those records.

"We have a mess down there in the records building," Blair County Judge Jolene G. Kopriva told the Blair County Salary Board Monday morning. "We want to begin to clean out and purge those records."

The records once housed in the courthouse's Highland Hall annex were moved when the county built the record storage office/highway garage building on West Loop Road.

Many of the records consist of notes, transcripts and tape recordings compiled by judges and court reporters, providing information that can be pulled when needed or when questions arise.

Kopriva said sometimes papers are found in these files that should

be on file at the Blair County prothonotary's office.

The state Supreme Court adopted guidelines on record retention, which went into effect May 29, the judge said. There's an effort now to see them adopted as law, but they're in effect as guidelines, so the county can move forward with the sorting job, she said.

Meanwhile, members of the salary board agreed Monday to hire Kristy Harker to tackle the work during an eight-week period at the rate of \$7.29 per hour for a 35-hour work week.

Kopriva said Harker, who graduated from St. Francis University in Loretto, did an internship at her office and sorted some of Kopriva's files. With that experience, Kopriva said she would be able to tackle the job.

Salary board member and Blair County Commissioner John H. Eichelberger Jr. questioned the need to hire another employee and suggested the task fall to current employees.

"I said a year ago I was not interested in hiring additional staff,"

Eichelberger said.

Kopriva said she didn't believe current staff has the time to complete this work.

"It's so overwhelming at this point," she said.

"I disagree that they're that busy," Eichelberger said.

Salary board member and Blair County Commissioner John J. Ebersole asked Kopriva if her fellow judges would make similar requests, and she said no. The judge said her request reflects work needing to be done in the files of past judges, whereas current judges are responsible for keeping their own files maintained in accordance with guidelines.

Kopriva suggested Harker work a month, then offer a report on the work done and work remaining.

Instead, Ebersole said he'd be willing to hire her for a maximum of eight weeks at a cost just more than \$2,000.

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