

Raises for county employees spark controversy

By **ROGER H. AYLWORTH**
Staff Writer

OROVILLE — Raises for two Butte County employees spawned a controversy because of what was described as “unfortunate timing.”

Tuesday, the top assistants to a pair of elected county department heads received 2 percent raises, because their bosses got re-elected last year.

Actually, the board approved raises for three positions, but only two of those positions are occupied.

The problem was the administrators got raises at the same time rank-and-file county workers are facing contracts that will include give-backs.

“It is unfortunate timing,” said Chico Supervisor Maureen Kirk.

Representatives of the county employee unions

had stronger words. Steve Allen, who represents the Butte County Probation Officers Association, called the raises “unconscionable.”

Cheryl Schiele, who represents the Butte County Management Employees Association, called the situation “very troubling.”

Rudy Jenkins with the Butte County Employees Association said simply, “I just don’t get it.”

Brian Ring, county director of human resources, said the raises were required by a pair of supervisors’ resolutions.

In 2009, the board passed a resolution that said for positions where the department head is an elected official — sheriff, clerk-recorder, treasurer-tax collector, district attorney, etc. — the department head gets a 2 percent raise each time the individual is re-elected.

Elected officials don’t get vacation time or paid leave time, so the raise-per-re-election was viewed as a way to make up for that.

Another resolution, passed in 2010, ties the salaries of the elected department head’s top assistants to the department head’s salary. These assistants are not part of any county bargaining unit. Under the resolution, the assistants’ salaries go up when their bosses’ go up.

Kirk was a member of the county compensation committee that wrote these resolutions.

Tuesday, she said the committee “looked long and hard” at the issue of the assistants’ pay.

“We thought it is fair. I still think it is fair,” she said.

The board voted unanimously to approve the raises for two assistants in the clerk-controller’s office, and one in the office of the auditor-controller. One of the assistant positions in the clerk-recorder’s office is currently not filled.

Staff writer Roger H. Aylworth can be reached at 896-7762 or raylworth@chicoer.com.



SMYTH

Chico RPEA (#77) Monthly Meeting

(RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOC.)

Thurs., April 7, 2011 11:15am
at Manzanita Place (Elks Club),
1705 Manzanita Ave., Chico.

Program: Estate Planning and various insurance products for individual retirees.

Presenter: Mark Johnsen, Certified Life Underwriter, founder / consultant to Unimark.

Questions after the Program are encouraged.
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