

Toftoy: deputy used sick leave, vacation for maternity leave

By Matt Schury

Kendall County Coroner Ken Toftoy says his deputy coroner used vacation and sick leave while she was on maternity leave twice in the last three years.

Critics of Toftoy have raised issues about how the long time coroner handled maternity leave for his deputy coroner Jacque Purcell, wife of Kendall County Board Chairman John Purcell.

Records obtained from the county treasurer's office show Purcell continually received her full salary from 2009 to the present during which time she went on maternity leave twice.

Toftoy said it is within his power as an elected official to run the office as he sees fit. Purcell has worked for the Coroner's office since 2003.

"Jacque used her vacation time and sick days so she came back to work when she was done using her vacation time and sick leave," Toftoy said adding that Purcell also worked during her leave talking calls. "She came back to work, she was working and taking calls."

Toftoy said he couldn't recall how much sick time she had available for maternity leave but it allowed enough for the two leaves.

"We're just a two person office. She's the only full time person besides me," he said noting that part-time deputies don't get vacation time or sick leave.

He confirmed that Purcell would be in and out of the office during her leave. "She'd come in and work on stuff and bring the baby in there and do vouchers and stuff like that," Toftoy said.

Purcell said her leave was anything but "traditional maternity leave" as she continued to do part-time work in the afternoon.

"I took the time that was allotted to me and I was able to extend it some because I worked intermittently during that time," Purcell said. "To say I'm not working is ridiculous."

In fact, Purcell says she ran inquiries two weeks after her second child was born.

In 2010 Purcell confirms that she took her maternity leave for her first child that started July 20 and she was back on call in September.

In 2011 she took her second maternity leave. She said she left the week before she had the baby at the beginning of August. She was at her master's training at St. Louis University and technically she was out of the office but working.

August 18 she was back running inquiries because Toftoy was out of town, she said.

Toftoy confirmed that he did hire some additional staff while Purcell was away to do clerical work and answer the phone, including Matthew Prochaska, a candidate for County Board.

"It's just politics and everybody gets their turn getting picked at," he said. "She had five and a half weeks, she used it up and came back to work," Toftoy said.

"I have a big bulls-eye on my back," he said. "You gotta have thick skin in this business when it comes to politics."

Own employee handbook

Toftoy added that he operates under his own employee handbook.

"It's not like (Planning) Building and Zoning or the Highway Department," Toftoy said.

State's Attorney Eric Weis said elected officials can follow their own rules when it comes to employees, follow the

county's rulebook or use a combination of the two.

"As long as they comply with the state statutes and what's required of their office, there is leeway that is different than the County Board oversight of a department head," Weis said.

Jeff Wilkins, the county's administrator, noted that departments that he oversees for the County Board operate similarly. Employees are allowed to take off up to 12 weeks per the Family Medical Leave Act, Wilkins explained.

He says the employees have a few choices when it comes to maternity leave. One option is for the employee to take time off and use their six weeks of disability pay, during which they get half

of their regular pay as allocated to them through the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF). Wilkins added that county employees also have the choice to use their accrued sick leave or paid personal days.

Wilkins' department handles human resources for the Animal Control Department, Planning Building, and Zoning, Technology, GIS and Facilities Management.

"It's really the employee's choice whether they want to do accrued time off or the IMRF disability and many employees will opt to go with the disability versus the paid time off," Wilkin said.

Plan group recommends range, firearm ordinance

By Matt Schury

The Yorkville Plan Commission last week unanimously voted to recommend approval of a text amendment to the city's zoning ordinance that would allow gun ranges in business districts and manufacturing districts with approval of a special use permit. The change also would allow manufacturing firearms in manufacturing districts.

The commission also agreed, with the city staff recommendation, that such a facility, if it is located in a strip mall, should be in end units so there are no adjoining walls.

If approved by the City Council next

Winninger is planning to apply for his federal firearms license. Once he gets that he says he will buy the AR-15 rifle in kits online, assemble and sell them to clients and gun enthusiasts through his Firearms Safety Academy.

AR-15s are assault rifles that soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq use, Winninger explained.

"It's a good hunting rifle, it's a good target rifle, it's a good all around rifle," he said. "People think the AR-15 and they think you're going to go out and start a war but they're just so versatile and easy to shoot that they're just a good rifle."

Winninger added that he doesn't plan