

News Herald

County leaders to face judge

■ Lake County commissioners subpoenaed over court flooding

Matthew Skrajner

MSkrajner@News-Herald.com

Twitter: @MattNewsHerald

In an ongoing legal battle over repeated flooding of county buildings, the Lake County commissioners are set to appear in Lake County court this afternoon.

Last week Lake County Probate Court Judge

Ted Klammer issued a court order requiring the board of commissioners to submit plans to fix draining problems that have led to multiple flooding incidents in the Courthouse West Annex, most recently on Nov. 3.

The commissioners then were served a subpoena on Wednesday with an appointment in Klammer's court at 1 p.m. today.

"We don't feel the action that has been placed upon us is justified, but we have to represent ourselves," said Commissioner Daniel P. Troy at the board's weekly meeting on Thursday. "Therefore we are being forced to spend taxpayer dollars to hire legal counsel."

Because the case involves two county offices, Prosecutor Charles E. Coulson cannot represent the commissioners.

The board approved the hiring Thursday of

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Ray Sines discusses his retirement

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Cleveland-based attorney Timothy T. Reid at a rate of \$200 per hour as special legal counsel effective Dec. 14.

"It makes no sense. The judge is unreasonable. The taxpayers should be certainly concerned of spending money foolishly on attorneys in this situation," Commissioner Raymond E. Sines said. "It's unfortunate that we have to hire one, and I think we ought to send the bill to the judge."

Klammer said he feels the commissioners did not need to hire a special counsel to represent them.

"It's common people sitting down to solve a problem," Klammer said. "But they don't care."

Klammer said he plans to represent himself in the matter.

He said the commissioners filed a writ of prohibition on Dec. 21 regarding the issue with the 11th District Court of Appeals, which basically asked the appellate court to order that Klammer not have jurisdiction in the matter.

Klammer said he planned to file a motion to dismiss response this morning to the writ of prohibition and that he expected the commissioners to be in his courtroom at 1 p.m.

The judge also said he's unsure if new plans to fix the flooding situation are going to solve the problem.

The dispute marks an eventful final commissioners' meeting for Sines, 62, who did not seek re-election in November.

His last day as commissioner is Monday.

Troy said he will always appreciate the way he and

Sines were able to work together over the years across party lines.

"This hasn't been about Republicans or Democrats at this table. It's been about what's right for the county," Troy said. "We've argued about stuff over the years... but they were all fairly minor skirmishes. At the end of the day, we didn't let that carry over to the next day's business."

Commissioner Robert E. Aufauld appreciated Sines' dedication over the years.

"We all came together as a team. We did not let politics interfere with the way that we ran this county," Aufauld said.

Sines, who was appointed commissioner to fill a vacancy in 2003, said the county will remain in good hands.

"We're fortunate in this county that we have some great elected officials, great employees that make it a work," Sines said. "The made this job easy for me."

The retiring commissioner said Troy had been "like a brother" to him since the days serving in the Ohio House of Representatives.

"Sometimes you argue, sometimes you agree, but you always love each other. That you," Sines said.

He said his family has always been supportive of his goals.

"If you could write a script and say, 'How would you want your life to be?' I wrote that script, and it's everything I've ever wanted," Sines said.

Willowick City Council President Judy Moran will take over the commission position on Jan. 1.

Staff Writer John Arth Hutchison contributed to the report.