

SUSAN FLORES' EMPLOYMENT REVIEWED BY TULAROSA BOARD OF TRUSTEES



The Board of Trustees for Tularosa, New Mexico is prepared to consider the employment of a commissioner for Otero County who is also an employee for the village. Otero County Commissioner Susan Flores has been working for the village for three years, according to Mayor Ray Cordova. Flores has worked for the village in its Municipal Court, coordinating community service hours. Flores also spends time volunteering for the Keep Tularosa Beautiful campaign. Cordova described Flores as being invaluable for the village as she has helped it acquire grant money for multiple projects. In a decision that was split, the board voted to let Flores stay employed with the village. That vote took place in August. According to Cordova, the board edited the agreement so Flores would be an employee for a span of three months instead of six. According to the Alamogordo Daily News, the employment of Flores with the village has caused controversy because there are trustees who believe her employment can be considered nepotism. The reason for this is that Flores' husband is a Municipal Court judge in Tularosa. Cordova has campaigned in favor of Flores, telling the board of trustees that Flores works much more than she is paid for and that she should remain employed with the village. The job title of Flores has also been changed to reflect her work as someone who searches for grant work with the village instead of the Municipal Court. Cordova said that Flores is not being paid from the Municipal Court budget anymore. Cordova also noted that there is no conflict of interest for Flores as an employee with the village while working as a county commissioner. He said that the mayor of Rio Rancho also worked as a county commissioner at one time. The website for Rio Rancho says that the mayor, Thomas Swisstack, did serve as a county commissioner but not while mayor. On the other hand, Swisstack serves as the deputy manage for public safety in Bernalillo County. On Tuesday, Flores did admit that she has an office in the Municipal Court but does not work for the court. She went on to explain that she finds work for those sentenced to community service. She also is responsible for finding grant money for projects in the village. "I think if people would come and talk to me, or would come and ask me, I could show them what I do," she said. Flores mentioned that her husband is not always in the office because he is a part-time judge. "I'm a policy-maker for the county of Otero. At the village of Tularosa, I work for the mayor; I handle community service workers, help them write grants. There's nothing between the two, you know, that would be a conflict of interest."