

EAU CLAIRE SCHOOLS STIPEND SCANDAL

Klaus can access retirement funds

Deal with district allows it, but lawsuit still set for trial

By Julian Emerson
Leader-Telegram staff

Three years after Bill Klaus tried to access his \$267,209 early retirement stipend before he retired, the former Eau Claire schools superin-

tendent now can receive that money as part of an agreement reached Monday with the school board.

The agreement, reached between lawyers representing Klaus and the school district, comes on the heels of a ruling by U.S. District Judge William Conley upholding the school district's position that Klaus' employment with the district ends June 30 and not two years from now, as Klaus contends his contract allows.

According to provisions of the

deal, Klaus is allowed to apply for his retirement stipend and other retirement benefits such as medical, dental and prescription drug coverage beginning July 1.

The agreement also notes that Klaus can appeal Conley's decision, meaning the controversy may not be over. Klaus' attorney, Scott Winston, did not return calls Tuesday regarding whether Klaus plans to appeal the decision.

Other portions of Klaus' \$1.19 mil-

lion lawsuit against the district are ongoing, including claims that school board members defamed him and didn't allow him to provide his side of the story during an investigation of the retirement stipend issue. The case is scheduled to go to trial in August, if it is not dismissed before then.

The board has countersued Klaus, seeking dismissal of his claims as well as having Klaus pay its legal fees.



Klaus

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BIRTH DAY THANKS

Grandma goes above and beyond by delivering granddaughter at her house



Jana Nelson, left, held her newborn daughter, Sydney, on Tuesday at Sacred Heart Hospital. Nelson's mother, Kathy Nelson-Smith, helped deliver the baby at Nelson-Smith's home. To view more photos go to leader-telegram.com/photos.com. Staff photo by Andi Stempniak

By Liam Marlaire
Leader-Telegram staff

Retired nurse Kathy Nelson-Smith has experience in obstetrics, but she had never helped deliver a baby at a home.

Until Tuesday.

Jana Nelson's water broke Tuesday morning, and she immediately left for her mother Kathy's Eau Claire home. In an unexpectedly brief span of time, Jana gave birth to a healthy 7-pound, 5-ounce girl. Grandma played a key role in the delivery of Jana's first child.

"I slapped (the baby) a few times to get her to cry," Kathy said. "I couldn't find anything else, so I cut some shoestring to tie off the (umbilical) cord."

The entire process took less than an hour, and the family was resting comfortably in Sacred Heart Hospital at about noon. Kathy's husband called 911 immediately after the delivery.

Jana, 27, of Eau Claire, had taken birthing classes at Sacred Heart, but the rapid delivery took her by surprise.

"I thought I had up to 24 hours, so I was taking my time," she said.

However, the baby didn't. Kathy helped calm both her daughter and new grandchild.

"It actually want really smoothly after the initial shock wore off," Jana said. "It came so fast and so easily."

The baby's name is in honor of Jana's late

father, whose middle name was Sydney.

"She's just so beautiful," Kathy said of the newborn.

Labor usually lasts 12 to 18 hours on average for first-time mothers, according to Merck, a research pharmaceutical company, and six to eight hours during subsequent pregnancies. Although Jana's labor was exponentially shorter than those figures, the relative ease of the delivery did little to assure her that possible future deliveries would go so smoothly.

"I'm probably more nervous after this," she said.

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"It actually want really smoothly after the initial shock wore off. It came so fast and so easily."

— Jana Nelson, on the birth of her baby at her mother's house in Eau Claire



Staff photo by Andi Stempniak

Robbery claim doesn't hold up

Eau Claire police officers cordoned off an area behind the Mega Holiday gas station at 1731 Brackett Ave. after a report of a stabbing and robbery. The report, which later was deemed to be false, was made by Collin P. Cooper, 20, of Eau Claire, who stabbed himself, police said. The injury to the lower right side of Cooper's abdomen is not life-threatening, and he was treated at a local hospital. His motive has not yet been determined. The Police Department is referring the case to the Eau Claire County district attorney's office for review. Cooper's bike laid near an air pump behind the station.

MENOMONIE CITY COUNCIL

City bows to new state workplace smoking law

It revises ordinance, will remove 'don't smoke' signs

By Pamela Powers
Menomonie News Bureau

MENOMONIE — City residents won't see signs anytime soon noting that smoking within five feet of windows and doors of public buildings is prohibited.

That's because with a new statewide workplace smoking ban set to begin July 5, the city no longer is allowed to post a distance at which smoking is not allowed. The city had banned smoking five feet from doors and windows.

City attorney Ken Schofield said the state law prohibiting smoking in indoor workplaces does not designate a specific distance smokers must be from building entrances. Instead, the provision states that smokers must keep a "reasonable distance" from doors and windows.

"I've never been a fan (of) something so vague as reasonable distance," Councilman Pat Brogan said.

The City Council on Monday approved a revised smoking ban ordinance to be in compliance with the state ban.

New firetruck

The City Council approved a bid of \$845,855 from Pierce of Appleton for a new Fire Department ladder truck.

The department received a \$675,000 U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant for the truck. The city will pay the remaining cost, including a radio, an automated defibrillator and to adjust the exhaust system.

The ladder truck will replace a nearly 35-year-old truck, fire Chief Jack Baus said. It is expected to be delivered late next month.

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