

NEWS

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Supervisors vote to retain Hueston during litigation

The Board of Supervisors today voted unanimously to increase the funding available to retain the Irell & Manella law firm to assist County Counsel in pursuing litigation against former Assessor Bill Postmus, four of his former employees, and a former contractor in his office.

Irell & Manella partner John C. Hueston led a county investigation into activities among Postmus' executive staff while Postmus served as Assessor. The investigation uncovered improper use of county resources for political purposes and the paying of employees for time during which they did no county work.

On May 12, based on the report's findings, the Board of Supervisors filed suit against Postmus, former assistant assessors Adam Aleman and Jim Erwin, former intergovernmental relations officer Rex Gutierrez, former taxpayer advocate Greg Eyler, former Assessor consultant Mike Richman, and Richman's consulting firm.

"The county will aggressively pursue this litigation to recover what was taken from the taxpayers," Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt said. "The county will not tolerate the improper use of public resources."

The Board of Supervisors originally retained Irell & Manella on Jan. 27 and set aside \$250,000 to pay the firm's billings. The county has so far paid the firm approximately \$200,000, so additional funding will likely be necessary as Hueston assists County Counsel with the case. The Board of Supervisors today approved setting aside an additional \$250,000.

County Counsel plans to handle the bulk of the work in-house in order to save money, and utilize Irell & Manella only when necessary on issues related to the investigation the firm conducted.