

# Spielvogel grievances detailed

Just cause hearing planned as board angles to fire newly hired LMC president

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**BENTON TOWNSHIP** — Lake Michigan College cleared the air Tuesday as

to why its president was suspended last week.

During a special meeting Friday, LMC's Board of Trustees found there was sufficient information to support the termination of Jennifer Spielvogel as president — pending the final determination at a just cause hearing before the board. The vote was unanimous and Spielvogel's hearing will be within

30 days of Friday's vote.

According to a press release and minutes from the special meeting, the board alleged she made unapproved and unauthorized expenses, including renovations to the president's office.



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Among the expenses, the board alleged she was planning an inauguration and bought a chain of office medallion.

The board further alleged she showed improper management behavior, made improper comments and demonstrated a lack of professionalism. She allegedly violated policies and offered inadequate goals

and objectives.

If the college should terminate Spielvogel for just cause, the release stated that LMC is under no contractual obligation to award severance compensation or continue any other fringe benefits provided by Spielvogel's contract.

Spielvogel was entering her fourth month as LMC's president. The Herald-Pal-

ladium reached out to Spielvogel, but was unable to get comment.

The board became concerned when reviewing expense requests and spoke with Spielvogel about the matters before the decision was made at the special meeting.

According to the meeting's

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minutes, Board Chairwoman Mary Jo Tomasini moved for the trustees to go into closed session at 9:12 a.m. Trustees remained in the Administrative Conference Room, while Spielvogel and her attorney, Bradley Glazier, were directed to another room.

The closed session ended at 11:12 a.m. and was moved back to an open meeting for the board to present its decision. The open meeting ended about 25 minutes later.

Trustee Stephen Small said during the special meeting “that it is with a heavy heart that just three months ago we were really happy and thought for sure we made the right choice, and now it’s ashes. (It) hurts a lot.”

Tomasini said in Tuesday’s released statement that the decision was a tough one to make.

“Although we are very disappointed, we know the college will continue to flourish thanks to the steadfast dedication of our employees and profound support from our communities,” Tomasini said. “I can speak on behalf of all LMC trustees that we hold our responsibility to the college in the highest regard and will always work to make the best decisions, even if they’re not always the easiest.”

The college has not ap-

pointed an interim president to serve during Spielvogel’s suspension. She is suspended with pay and board members and cabinet are directing normal operations. The decision for the two entities to operate in her stead was approved unanimously at the special meeting.

News of the suspension came Friday after a public hearing notice was posted online for the special meeting. The meeting’s intent was said to be to “discuss a written legal opinion from the college’s attorney related to an employment matter.”

At the time, LMC officials said Spielvogel was suspended pending a final resolution to an ongoing personnel matter. All factors of the matter were withheld citing confidentially.

The board voted in December 2015 to hire Spielvogel among five other candidates to replace longtime president Bob Harrison, who had led LMC since 2009 and retired after a 16-year career with the institution. Spielvogel became president Jan. 1.

Before becoming LMC’s president, Spielvogel was vice president of evidence and inquiry at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland. At Cuyahoga, Spielvogel worked in an environment that included 3,000 employees and 30,000 students spread across four campuses in the Cleveland area.