

Lewiston-Auburn

Ex-teacher's suit goes back to court to decide final three pending issues

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By Christopher Williams, Staff Writer

AUBURN - A former math teacher at Poland Regional High School who was suspended after two months on the job is expected to learn later this week whether his lawsuit will go forward or be dismissed.

A motion to determine whether there is evidence to take the case to trial is scheduled for a hearing in Androscoggin County Superior Court on Friday.

In 2001, Glenn A. Baxter of Belgrade Lakes sued Maine School Union 29, plus two administrators and five faculty members. He claimed he was harassed, then suspended after he refused to resign. He charged in his suit that school officials never intended to keep him on as a teacher beyond his one-year probationary period.

A judge in 2002 dismissed Baxter's complaint against the five faculty members. Several counts, including wrongful termination, infliction of emotional distress, defamation and slander were dismissed against all defendants. The remaining three counts were continued. They are:

- taking of property (against the school and then-Principal Jacqueline Soychak;)
- punitive damages (against Superintendent Robert Wall and Soychak;) and
- age discrimination (against Wall, Soychak and the school.)

Baxter said he was suspended in November 2000 because the school didn't agree with his grading policies on homework assignments, according to news reports. He also said he was criticized for not reading his e-mails.

He was paid through the school year and in May 2001 was told his contract would expire in August and would not be renewed. He said the school never gave him a written explanation.

He was 58 years old in November 2001, according to court records.

Baxter is seeking a court order to allow him to get back from the school belongings he claims he left following his suspension, including a computer, a file cabinet and radio equipment.