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Former Maine Township trustee resigns from controversial job

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Maine Township Supervisor Laura Morask

A former trustee hired for a newly created job in Maine Township has resigned amid questions over the legality and ethics of the hiring.

Supervisor Laura Morask announced at a board meeting last week that former Trustee Kelly Schaefer resigned from a \$30,000 part-time fundraising position in the food pantry.

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Schaefer, who lost an election bid running on the Republican slate with Morask in April, was hired without a job search or approval from trustees.

"It was becoming, she felt, a distraction to the work that we do as a township," Morask said.

Morask has argued she had legal authority to create the new position, which was intended to boost funding as the food pantry hours expand to five days a week from two. Morask could not be reached for comment Wednesday on whether the township intends to hire someone else for the job.

The hiring has become a flashpoint in an ongoing debate of whether the township is spending too much on overhead costs to deliver services.

In 2016, Maine Township spent \$678,583 on administrative expenses from its general assistance fund and \$196,101 on grants and services including mental health services, domestic violence

prevention programs and meals for seniors. That's more than triple the administrative costs compared to services provided to those in need.

The township also has a reserve fund of more than \$5.5 million, according to the state controller's office.

"I think we're just upside-down with what we spend versus what we deliver to the poor," Trustee Susan Sweeney said.

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