

Council set to pick public appointee over mayor for mosquito district board

By KATY SWEENEY-Staff Writer

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CHICO — The majority of the Chico City Council last week shot down a motion to appoint the mayor to the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District rather than a community member.

Council members then voted 4-2 Tuesday night to open up recruitment to the public for a two-year term on the board. Mayor Ann Schwab and Councilman Scott Gruendl dissented.

The district aims to suppress mosquito-transmitted disease and to limit the number of pests.

Albert Beck has served on the district board for Chico for more than 30 years. His appointment will end in 2012.

Gruendl said he thinks the city could be better served if the mayor represented Chico.

"I think there's an accountability factor that's achieved when an elected official represents the city on the board," Gruendl said.

He was offended that the incumbent in the past said the law does not compel him to follow the city's direction though Gruendl said the direction should not be solely considered.

"I remain offended," Gruendl said.

Vice Mayor Jim Walker questioned how technical the role would be and if the appointee needed knowledge on biology, vector control, state regulations and chemicals.

"If this is a public health position, then I think we need to take the politics out of it," Walker said.

Schwab said she disagreed.

Gruendl said he thinks finance management and governing knowledge of someone like the mayor is superior.

The council will consider citizens' applications at its Dec. 20 meeting.