

MAYOR `S RESIGNATION JOLTS VILLAGE

By **Karen Dillon** CHICAGO TRIBUNE JULY 27, 1989

In a surprise decision, Olympia Fields' mayor has quit the job only four months after being elected to her third term, saying that trustees were heading the village in the wrong direction and that she could do nothing to stop them.

Anita Healey, mayor of the wealthy south suburb since 1981, cited the Village Board's inexperience and "lack of cohesiveness" and complained of being overworked as she tried to hold the board members together.

"I have tried to lead them," she said. "I have tried it, but I don't feel it's succeeding."

At the same time, Healey said Wednesday, she often found herself "in the uncomfortable and impossible position of defending actions, supporting policies and enforcing ordinances with which I am in complete disagreement." The Village Board will choose a new mayor.

Healey stunned trustees when she announced her decision at the end of Monday's board meeting.

"There was no indication that this was coming," Trustee Patrick Halpin said, adding that the mayor had never expressed her displeasure with the board.

"It was like any other meeting," he said. "She asked if there was any new business, and then she said she had one other item. She read this statement, handed it to the village clerk and asked for adjournment.

"She was out of the building before we got out of our chairs."

The resignation leaves the village shy not only a mayor but also one board member. Trustee Peter Flynn, also re-elected in April, resigned a month ago, citing personal reasons.

Healey said the board`s inexperience-its senior member has three years of experience-made her job difficult. Where she used to work 15 hours a week, she found herself working 25. "I found myself spending a lot of time for voluntary work," she said.

The trustees` inexperience also led to some poor decision-making, Healey said. At Monday`s meeting, for example, the board tabled an ordinance to restrict water sprinkling-an ordinance, she said, it clearly should have approved.

"Oak Lawn supplies us and surrounding communities with Lake Michigan water," she said. "To keep peace with our supplier and neighboring communities, we should have passed it."

She also said few corrections to the minutes are made at the twice-a-month meetings, indicating that members do little homework.

"Since the last election, there were no corrections," she said.

". . . With experienced trustees, there are corrections."

Healey said she had spent about six weeks mulling over her decision with her husband, Thomas, and two advisers who do not live in Olympia Fields.

Healey did not recommend a successor. "I wish whoever it is well," she said. "I can`t see what will happen in the future. I have my hopes that a good compromise that will benefit the village will be made, compromise meaning establishing a cohesive board."