

O'Rourke drops 2 members of hospital board

County Executive doesn't reappoint critics of Carter

By Barbara J. Durkin
Staff Writer

Two critics who unsuccessfully tried to stop Mack Carter from winning the top job at Westchester County Medical Center now have lost their own hospital board posts.

County Executive Andrew O'Rourke has chosen not to reappoint the hospital board's chairwoman, Carol Farkas, or vice chairman, Arthur Litt, both longtime members of the board.

Although he had initially joined in criticism of Carter's appointment, Joseph Colosimo, a board member for about 18 months, has been appointed to a term to run through 1994 and named chairman for the next year.



Andrew O'Rourke

The removal of the board's top two members has been widely expected since they criticized O'Rourke's appointment. At one point, he had welcomed their resignations, sending them form letters and stamped envelopes.

"While we have not always been in agreement recently, I would like to thank you for the time and effort you have expended in serving on the Westchester County Hospital Board," O'Rourke wrote in letters to Farkas and Litt.

Colosimo was allowed to remain because O'Rourke wanted some "continuity" and because "some were more divisive than others," spokeswoman Kara Bennorth said.

O'Rourke has not yet decided what to do about four other board members whose terms have expired, Bennorth said. The board voted unanimously last year that Carter should not be appointed to run the hospital.

Farkas said she was relieved to be finished with the post despite her deep feelings for the hospital.

"The last nine months have been incredibly wearing. It's not what I took this job for," said Farkas, who served on the board for more than 12 years, several as chairwoman. "I think we all did what we felt we had to do."

Litt could not be reached for comment last night.

Farkas and Litt both vehemently opposed the appointment of Carter as hospitals commissioner, claiming he was not qualified to run the Valhalla hospital. The two were among nine board members involved in an unsuccessful lawsuit that sought to prevent Carter from taking the job before winning approval from the county Board of Legislators.

County legislators narrowly confirmed Carter last month.

Colosimo, although he agreed with fellow board members' concerns about Carter, did not join the lawsuit.

"We made our point when we wrote to the legislators, as far as I was concerned," said the 64-year-old consulting engineer from Yonkers.

But he did not criticize his colleagues yesterday and said the absence of Farkas and Litt would be a "tremendous loss" to the hospital.

Colosimo said he had not yet been notified that he was named chairman of the 15-member volunteer board, which advises the county on hospital issues including budget, long-term planning and daily operations.

"I will do what I can to the best of my ability," he said.

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