

# Decisions upset former vets board member

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Gail Belmont has resigned from the Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors citing differences she has with how the current board is treating the community's veterans.

The board is pursuing a policy to begin charging Bill Brinlee American Legion Post 102 for use of the new hall.

"My goal is to help veterans and always be there for them," said Belmont, who served on the board for 15 years. "I don't feel that is the direction of the board anymore."

She cited the board's decision to charge the Legion post and not wanting to endanger the reputation of Quilts of Honor as her reasons for stepping down.

Belmont is the executive director for and founder of Quilts of Honor, the nonprofit, volunteer organization that honors servicemen and veterans suffering from combat-related injuries and wounds by providing them with handmade patriotic quilts as a gesture of appreciation for their service to the nation.

District General Manager Frank Garza confirmed the board has directed the post to begin paying for use of the new hall.

The district is required to provide a meeting place for veterans, he said, "but no where does it say we have to provide it for free."

The post will be charged the same as any other veterans and non-profit organization, Garza said.

He added the district needs the fees to pay for financing of the new hall and if the district's finances improve in the future the board could look at allowing the post to meet in the hall for free.

"That has always been an American Legion hall, Belmont said. "I feel this is not right. I had hoped everyone could have worked this out."

With the old hall demolished and the new hall still incomplete, the Legion post is meeting at the Jenny Lind Odd Fellows Lodge located at 11845 Main St. in old Jenny Lind.