

Saturday, June 20, 2009

# DOTHANEAGLE

## Court drops ethics charge against fired administrator

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The felony charge alleging that the former Geneva County administrator used her office for personal gain was recently dismissed in circuit court.

Kirke Adams, the Geneva County district attorney, confirmed the charges against Donna Jones, 53, of Hartford, were dismissed Thursday in Geneva County Circuit Court. Geneva County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jones in March 2008.

According to court records, Jones was indicted for an ethics violation for using her position for personal gain as the then Geneva County administrator. Some of the allegations included that Jones improperly received overtime pay. The charge is a class B felony, which carried a possible sentence of two to 20 years in prison.

Jones was immediately fired after her arrest.

"It is not in the best interest of justice to take this case to a jury when all time sheets in question were approved by the County Commission and accepted by the State Examiners," Adams wrote in the motion to dismiss the indictment.

The Alabama Department of Public Examiners conducted an audit to cover Jones' pay over the past three years.

*"It is not in the best interest of justice to take this case to a jury when all time sheets in question were approved by the County Commission and accepted by the State Examiners."*

**Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams** written in the motion to dismiss the indictment

See **CHARGE, 3A**

## Charge

*continued from 1A*

Adams said auditors accepted all the time sheets from Jones as accurate, after they found there was no written county policy she had violated.

"It's a very, very tough situation to prosecute when the actions had been OK'd by the commission," Adams said. "The auditors didn't cite any illegal activity."

Shortly after the audit, Adams said Jones repaid the county about \$1,000.

He said the completed audit found numerous errors and oversights in the county's payroll system, and, over a three-year period, Jones was underpaid and overpaid several times. He said it added up to about a \$200 overpayment. She was also paid once after she was fired, which Adams said was part of what she repaid the county.

"The auditors said it's not their job to determine legality, but they said they accepted the time sheets because they found they've been accepted in the past by the commission," Adams said.