



## Foxwoods contends Robi Blute owes debt

### Casino seeking disputed payment

**N**egotiations are under way to settle a civil suit seeking nearly \$11,000 from the wife of former congressman and Massachusetts Port Authority chief Peter I. Blute for gambling debts she did not repay at Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Roberta I. Blute, who lives in Shrewsbury with her husband and two children, gambled on credit at the casino, accumulating a debt of \$10,820, according to a civil suit in Worcester District Court.

Mrs. Blute, a former vice president at Whittier Health Network in Westboro, borrowed the money in 1998 during several transactions, according to Robert F. Mills, a Hyannis lawyer representing casino owners Mashantucket Pequot Gaming Enterprise.

Mr. Mills said that a judgment for collection of the money was made by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Court in February. Mrs. Blute, through Holden arbitrator James A. Gage, offered a lower amount, he said.

"We're reviewing it," Mr. Mills said. "There's already a judgment against her. We're trying to enforce that judgment."

Mrs. Blute was involved in a traffic accident in May 1999, Mr. Mills said, where she received serious injuries. A medical report he received indicated that she suffered a head injury, he said, and as a result, was not employed.

Mr. Gage declined to discuss the injury, saying that Mr. Mills should have refrained from mentioning it in public.

Peter Blute confirmed yesterday that his wife had been injured in an accident in Haverhill. State police in Newbury and Haverhill police said they had no record of the accident.

Mrs. Blute has recovered, her husband said, but still has headaches. She changed jobs, he said, because she was offered a better one in Needham. He did not recall the exact name of the medically-related company where his wife works.

Mrs. Blute, who has been outspoken on political issues in the past, did not wish to comment publicly on the civil suit or the contended amount she owes,

her husband said.

"I'm going to speak for her on this one," Mr. Blute said, while acknowledging that the gambling debt is her business.

Mr. Blute insisted that the civil suit was suspended and now in arbitration, a point refuted by Mr. Mills. The suit lists Mrs. Blute's name as Roberta I. Blute-Crudale. Crudale is her maiden name, which she sometimes uses as her last name, her husband said.

Mr. Blute characterized Foxwoods as "money hungry casino operators" who are at fault for luring gamblers to spend too much.

"They purposely advance you money," he said. "That's an issue. They think they've advanced a different amount than what she thinks. They won't be getting what they requested."

Mr. Blute suggested that the casino was inflating the amount his wife owes, saying final settlement may be half the amount demanded in the civil suit.

He characterized the dispute as "not a big deal." Mrs. Blute, he said, borrowed the money about two years ago during a visit to the Mashantucket, Conn., casino. She has not been back recently, he said, and he has not gone with her because he does not gamble.

Casino spokesman Arthur R. Henick said the tribal nations do not comment on pending litigation.

Mr. Blute, a Republican, lost his congressional seat in 1996 to Democrat James P. McGovern. He was later appointed executive director of Massport, but resigned after a much-publicized "booze cruise" in Boston Harbor where a woman passenger bared her breasts for photographers.

Now a radio talk show host on "Blute and Moes in the morning" on WRKO, Mr. Blute said he sees no reason why his wife's casino debt is fodder for a news story.

"Unfortunately, her personal business is dragged out into the open by you all," he told a reporter. "I don't think it's necessary." ■