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FEA, school board hit contract impasse

By LYNN ORR
After 10 bargaining sessions, school board negotiators and Farmington Education Association (FEA) representatives appear to hold little hope that a settlement will be reached before the current contract runs out on Aug. 31.

Agreements in class size, salary increases, insurance benefits, school calendar, retirement incentives, cost of living, and layoff time notices are the stumbling blocks confronting a new contract for Farmington School District teachers.

Each side remains skeptical that the other side really wants a new-school settlement. Teachers cite the Crestwood court

decision (in which the firing of striking teachers was upheld) and lack of interest by district negotiators as possible reasons for lack of progress toward a pre-school settlement.

Board negotiators saw contract talk problems stem from the lack of a contract settlement in West Bloomfield for almost one year and an interest in regional bargaining on the part of the teachers.

But both bargaining units are pleased with initial gains in limiting the contract articles opened for bargaining to 11 out of an original 23.

"That was a significant settlement," says Richard Ringstrom, FEA Executive Director. Robert Coleman, Director of Employee Relations and

'Not a single syllable on anything opened has changed.'

head of the school board team, agrees.

But there has been no other progress.

"Not a single syllable on anything opened has changed," Ringstrom says.

BOTH TEAMS were hesitant to discuss school calendar issues, which have been the main topic of discussion since June 15, they admit. Class size, however, initiated considerable comment from negotiators.

We have a clear position on that," says Coleman. "We have one of the best class size clauses in Oakland County, and we made commitments to our residents in the millage election that we intend to keep."

Coleman believes the district has in effect guaranteed the fall class size situation by already recalling 89 of the 195 teachers pinkslipped this fall—"the earliest we've ever been able to do this," he adds. "We've guaranteed the provisions of this year's con-

tract." The district is asking for a clause that limits class size on the condition that district revenues from state aid membership and local property tax increase by five per cent for the years covered by the contract.

FEA representatives, however, want class size guarantees minus any conditions on district revenues.

"We've had guarantees before on both individual class size and averages," Ringstrom says. Surveys of teachers conducted in January indicate class size is an important issue to teachers, he says.

In initial proposals, the FEA is looking for an approximate six per cent salary adjustment increase, plus in-

crements. Farmington teachers are currently working on a 10-step increment plan whereby salary is increased in relationship to years of experience to a certain limit.

The FEA is looking for a cost-of-living adjustment as well.

"If there's going to be any kind of agreement beyond one year, cost-of-living has to be part of the settlement," Ringstrom says.

Approximately 60 per cent of Farmington School District teachers are approaching the top of the salary schedule, about \$20,000 with 10 years experience and an MA.

"Farmington is in the top half of pay in Oakland County," Ringstrom

Transportation for seniors gets green light from Hills

By Louise Okrutzky
Farmington area senior citizens could be riding in style if the Farmington City Council agrees to co-sponsor a bi-city transportation system.

The Farmington Area Commission on Aging, which is proposing the system, won half the battle for senior transportation when the vacation-ridden Farmington Hills City Council voted in its backing by three to two.

Since the proposal has the two cities sharing the estimated \$14,000 yearly operating cost for the one-van system, Farmington must agree to the plan before it's put into action. Farmington Hills would pitch in \$12,000 and Farmington would give the remaining \$2,000 to the system. Cost is based on the size of the area.

According to the proposal which the Farmington Hills City Council accepted, residents 60-years-old and older would be able to make reservations for door to door pick up 24 hours in advance of a trip. The 12 passenger van would stay within the boundaries of the two cities except for trips to Twelve Oaks Mall, Novi and weekly visits to nearby hospitals.

Two dissenting votes to the plan were cast by Taylor Joan Dudley and Councilman Robert Amori. Mrs. Dudley system but had reservations about limiting its use to seniors.

SHE WOULD LIKE TO SEE the system eventually expand to include another less mobile part of the cities' population, teens and youngsters.

"I'm afraid that I can't honestly and wholeheartedly support a system that doesn't address all the people," she said.

Many teens rely on parents for their transportation. If their parents are too busy or disinterested to take them to after-school activities, teens can be just as immobile as the el-

derly. Mrs. Dudley explained. Amori wanted the council to look into the plan further before giving it final approval. Although his suggestions fell by the wayside for want of support, he voted against approving the proposal.

Councilmembers Jan Dolan, Earl Oppenhausser and Keith Deason voted their approval of the plan. Timing was important, according to Mrs.

Dolan, since the Farmington City Council plans to look at the proposal Monday.

"We should show them that we agree with them so the city of Farmington will know that we're doing something about it," she said.

Otherwise, Farmington might hesitate over whether the neighboring city would eventually approve the plan, according to Mrs. Dolan.

PLANS FOR the transportation service include some expansion and tackle the problem of obtaining vans and administering the system.

After the first year of operation, the Commission on Aging suggests that additional van equipment be purchased to provide a wheelchair lift or ramp for the van.

The eleven or twelve passenger van would cost more than \$7,000. Although the Farmington Area Jaycees offered to help raise the money, Farmington Hills Mayor Joan Dudley was sceptical.

"I consider any help from the Jaycees to be unexpected—delightfully unexpected but unexpected," said Mrs. Dudley.

"I would hate to have this program contingent upon that," she added. Commission members picked an independent bus system after surveying the needs of area seniors and looking at Oakland County's proposal for a Dial-a-Ride system.

Oakland County's system has yet to establish an age limit for its riders and has set its start date back from September to January, 1978, according to Ms. Bates. The rides would be open to college and high school students. The cities wouldn't have direct control over the service and there wasn't any way in which the Commission could guarantee to the cities that their contributions to running the system would be matched by an equal amount of services.

ANOTHER SOLUTION which was disregarded involved extending the Farmington Taxi Service.

"Taxi cabs may not be viewed as negatively in some neighborhoods as vans or other vehicles might," said (Continued on page 10A)

Senior zoning ball gets thrown to council

Controversy over the proposal to add a senior citizens zoning to Farmington Hills' ordinance will land in the City Council's laps, Sept. 12. After that meeting, a public hearing could be scheduled for Sept. 29.

In meeting with the city council, the Farmington Hills Planning Commission and Housing Commission will present a divided front.

Planning Commission head Dave Stader explained to the city council that his group was looking to the officials for guidance out of the realms of disagreement.

While the Housing Commission has given its support to senior zoning which would allow for one story or RCE zones and mid-rise or RCE zoning, the Planning Commission opposes the mid-rise proposal. Two of its members doubt the need for any senior zoning consideration.

"There is no proponent for an ordinance of this city and how we approach problems. We should stop, take a look and review," she said.

WHEN THE HOUSING Commission's presentation delved into discussions of the amount of need for housing in the city and social implications of such development, it went beyond the scope of the Planning Commission. Stader argued. Therefore, the group decided to go to the city council.

While Councilmember Earl Oppenhausser chastised the Planning Commission for not having a public hearing, Mayor Joan Dudley thought Stader's move was commendable.

"Reviewing the motion is a good thing to do. We should stop and take a look when new facts come to light. In the eyes of the planning commission, those facts brought to light raised some questions.

"It raised questions of policy, philosophy of this city and how we approach problems. We should stop, take a look and review," she said.



In competition

Marty Pribs butterflies his way to the finish line in the Northwest Suburban League meet. The 8-year-old is a member of Kendallwood Swim Club. Complete story with pictures on page 1C.

Aging Commission plans to meet on 4th Thursday

Farmington's Commission on Aging will meet the fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings are scheduled at the Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty and at the Farmington Hills City Hall,

31555 Eleven Mile. Meetings are set for 7:30 p.m., August 23 in Farmington and at 7:30 a.m. Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 22, in Farmington Hills.

'A Joyful Noise'

By LORAIN McCLISH
A cultural afternoon featuring a family concert by Detroit's Max Davey Singers and the works of a fast-rising American artist is set for 3 p.m. Sunday at the Farmington Community Center, Farmington Road, between Ten and Eleven Mile.

The concert is expected to be particularly beneficial for teenagers studying music. Guests are invited to bring picnic lunches.

"A Joyful Noise" is one of the Max Davey Singers' twice-a-year shows which feature headline entertainers. Ted Strasser is the guest narrator for the show that includes familiar songs, some sacred music, and a musical parody of television commercials.

The art exhibit, by Bob Harper, of Richmond, Va., will be on display in the center's house.

Harper works mostly in black and white, which he says "can reveal my message with more impact and clarity." His intention, he said, "is to paint pictures that people anywhere in the world can identify with regardless of their academic or cultural background."

He has been commissioned, on several occasions, to paint for units of the U. S. Armed Forces, and in 1970, received a commission from the U. S. Defense Department to prepare a series of paintings for the permanent gallery in the Pentagon.

ONE OF HARPER'S goals is to promote an awareness of the arts. His affiliation with Concert Series, Inc., combining graphic art and music, works to achieve that goal, he said.

Concert Series was organized by Farmington residents Margaret and

Max Davey, when the singers expanded to include a small contingent of dancers for their shows, and a headliner.

Membership consists of persons interested in fostering a cultural atmosphere in the metropolitan area. An annual contribution of \$35 makes one a sustaining member; patron members donate \$50.

Members receive two free tickets to each of the series' regular concerts produced in the spring and at Christmas time, either in Detroit's Masonic Temple or Ford Auditorium. Sell-out crowds have been the norm since the series began.

TICKETS FOR "A Joyful Noise"

are \$4 and because the Max Davey Singers are a non-profit organization (most of the performers donate their services without charge) are tax deductible.

Music to the Daveys, they say, "is as much of a spiritual mission as it is a vocation."

Tickets to the Farmington show are available by calling the Daveys at 476-6226, or can be picked up at the community center, either ahead of time, or on the day of the show.

Parking will be allowed, only on the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College. Free shuttle buses will bring guests to the center, or, in case of rain, to Mercy High School auditorium.

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The Max Davey Singers take to the tambourine for a specialty number. From left, clockwise, the singers are Kevin McGee, Don Awres, Jim Pas,

Paul Hillebrand, Ken Covington, Dan Stevens, Kevin McGinnis and Mark Ennis.