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Cop hopeful makes sex bias charge

By LYNN ORR

Bonnie Swadling says she lost a job as a Farmington Hills police officer because of sex discrimination.

And she's taking her complaint to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights with the hope that legal action will force the department to promote her.

Ms. Swadling, 28, was hired by the police department in September 1975 under the federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA).

While she and another female community service officer (CSO) were paid under CETA, three former male cadets—who were made CSOs when the cadet program was dropped—were paid by the city.

"In the fall of 1976, the department placed an ad for police officers, and at that time there were five CSOs," she says. "Since the fall, all of the men have gone through training and are now police officers."

"I was due for the next appointment at the training academy. However, instead of appointing me, they appointed a man who was an outsider."

His appointment became effective May 1, 1977, the same month Ms. Swadling filed her initial complaint.

When Ms. Swadling questioned police officials about the job, she was told the city hadn't any intention of sending CETA CSOs to the academy, she says.

"I CAN'T buy that one dollar is greener than another," she says.

Police Director John Nichols and attorney Charles Koller, whose firm is handling the case for Farmington Hills, have both been unavailable for comment.

"It was my understanding that one of the steps toward becoming a police officer was through this program," Ms. Swadling says, adding that the department has since informed newly hired CSOs to the contrary.

The department failed to provide her with a job description until 2½ months ago, she says.

With three years of criminal justice education acquired at Michigan State University, she says she hasn't any intention of remaining a CSO.

"I took the patrolman's test when I was hired, but they later told me it was an old patrolman's test, which I had no way of knowing."

She also was given an oral test.

The cadets-turned-CSOs didn't have to reapply to the city to become police officers, nor did they have to retest, Ms. Swadling contends.

Ms. Swadling isn't a member of a union, since CETA employees weren't allowed to join unions before last summer, she says. She filed suit first with CETA and the complaint was turned over to the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, since the city advertises as an equal opportunity employer.

"They have no blacks or Chicanos, and only one woman officer working in the juvenile department," she says.

As far as she's concerned, the department isn't interested in hiring women.



Winter spirit

Young Darcy Ryerson has yet to discover the adult snow buff out to the hill near the Farmington School attitude toward snow in the city. Slippery roads signal good sledding weather instead of bad driving in the youngsters' mind. Darcy's father Pat took the

Fire service co-op strategy is step closer

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills residents are a step closer to having seven fire departments serve their needs.

After more than a year of study, the city council has agreed to enter into a cooperative fire service with six other communities. The Hills will foot 30 per cent of the first year's costs—\$16,000 of the estimated \$45,000.

Although approving cooperation in the service, the Hills council refrained from approving the budget until it is known how many of the other communities will agree to the service.

Other communities contemplating the action are Farmington, West Bloomfield, Commerce Township, Walled Lake, Wixom and Novi.

Hills City Mgr. George Majors told council members Monday night that the agreement would go a long way toward standardizing equipment between various firefighting units.

"I'M UNSURE that if we responded to a fire in another community today whether we would have the correct adapters for the hydrants," said Majors.

Other metropolitan communities, he says, have standardized equipment. But the Detroit area isn't one of those communities.

"Each community around here has sort of done its own thing," he said.

Majors lauded the cooperative effort, saying it would be "money well spent."

Under the agreement, a board of administration would be formed—Southwestern Oakland County Fire Service Cooperative(SOCFSC). Each participating community would have one board member who would be either the fire chief or his designate. First year plans call for the hiring of a fire service coordinator.

Theoretically, if he does a proper job, his position could be dissolved within two years, with the chiefs taking over, according to Majors.

Some of the cities involved now have informal agreements for lending firefighter aid. But under the cooperative, the thrust would be toward planning placement of fire stations, joint training, second alarm response coordination and equipment standardization.

Consideration of a cooperative came to the fore after the Public Services Administration completed a study which indicated that firefighting service was inadequate in southwest Oakland County.

Presently, Farmington Hills works primarily a volunteer fire department with a full-time fire chief. The City of Farmington has public safety officers who serve both as police officers and firefighters.

The consulting firm examined three alternatives for future firefighting service. It concluded that an areawide cooperative was the best alternative after ruling that continuation of the present systems would be insufficient and total consolidation would be politically unfeasible and too expensive.

Total cost for consolidation would have been \$7.5 million, according to the study. Maintaining present services also would adversely affect the communities monetarily because of duplication of personnel, apparatus, equipment, training and communications, according to the study.

Parents question middle school mechanics

Farmington School District staff, parents, and administrators appear more concerned about how middle school would be adopted rather than if the alternative structure is a part of Farmington's future.

The middle school level would take the place of junior high. It is designed to cope with the lower level of enrollment that Farmington is expected to have in the future.

More than 100 persons crammed the district's board offices Monday for a two-session public hearing called by the Task Force on School Organizational Structure (SOS).

Questions of the audience ranged from what is a middle school to how, when and where the district might adopt education's newest answer to declining enrollment.

"The middle school advocates focus their attention on individualization and looking at the developmental needs of the child," explained Dr. Fred Ignatovich, consulting chairman to the task force established one year ago.

Less emphasis on boy-girl social activities in favor of group activities; intramural rather than intermural sports; interdisciplinary rather than departmentalized approach; and the importance of a home base (one teacher) are some of the ways in which a middle school differs from a traditional junior high, Ignatovich explained.

IGNATOVICH emphasized that the task force has not made its final recommendations. Those are expected by March. But the options have been whittled down to three alternatives—retention of the seventh-ninth grade current structure, and the alternatives of sixth-eighth or seventh-eighth structures, he says.

While two parents verbally opposed moving sixth graders up to a middle school level, most of the audience agreed that ninth graders belonged in high school. But staff members particularly were interested in how the task force viewed the transition to middle school.

"Our present junior high system is a sleight-of-hand of our educational system," junior high teacher Patricia Brown said. And Dancel Junior High teacher Bob Winter expressed the concerns of many staff members—teacher turnover and staffing.

Ignatovich, speaking for the task force, agreed that a switch to middle schools would be a dramatic change for the district.

"This change, when and if it's made and whatever change is made, will have long-range effects for Farmington," he told the audience.

Inservice would be an imperative in any recommendations for implementation of a middle school concept, Ignatovich assured the audience. Giving teachers a preference option for placement may be another recommendation, he said.

PARENT opposition centered on moving sixth graders out of elementary school.

"I don't think sixth graders should have to deal with the realities of junior high," said Rita Turner, parent of three children in the Farmington school system.

Higginmadow parent Linda Berman agreed, noting that switching classes and the increased activities in junior high often contribute to nervousness in seventh grade students.

Another parent, however, approved of the move, stating that sixth grade girls particularly, are emotionally ready for junior high.

"Ninth through twelfth grade provides a nice continuity for planning a good program," she added.

Ignatovich emphasized that declining enrollment, the major impetus behind the task force's appointment, mandated an evaluation of the district.

Asked about the spurt of home development in the northwest, Ignatovich assured the audience that the pessimistic predictions about decreased student populations were on target.

"The old assumption that if you had (Continued on page 5A)



Fairview Elementary School's closing came as no surprise to principal Don Cowan, but the final verdict still was a bitter pill to swallow. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Unanimous vote on Fairview closing

Fairview Elementary School will close this June, but Farmington School District officials hope to find an alternative use for the building.

The board of education Tuesday voted unanimously to close the 12-year old-school. Fairview students will be bused to Eagle Elementary School.

The decision came as no surprise to Fairview parents and staff, as the school was targeted some months back as the next victim of declining enrollment. Fairview is located in Old Franklin Town subdivision in the northeast section of the city, the area hardest hit by declining enrollment.

Although some parents opposed the school closing at a board meeting earlier this month, the fact that Fairview would operate at only 50 per cent capacity next year was a convincing argument for most.

The district has received some inquiries about future use of the building, according to Supt. Lewis Schulman. And district officials are considering the possibility of using the building as an early education center, he added.

Fairview Principal Donald Cowan and teacher Nancy Simonek attended the board meeting to hear the bad news.

"I'd like to commend the board and administration for this early action on a school closing," said Ms. Simonek, who has taught at Fairview since the school opened.

"This gives us time for a smooth and orderly transition. I certainly hope that when the next school closing comes, as we know it will, it can be handled the same way."

Ms. Simonek also praised Fairview students and parents, adding that they would be an asset to their new school. And she had glowing recommendations for Cowan, principal at Fairview for seven years.

Although the district doesn't expect to save more than \$70,000 from the closing of the building, the decision was based on projected school enrollments. While the district currently has nearly 14,000 students enrolled, projections indicate the student population will decline to about 10,700 by the 1981-82 school year.

"The closing of the building is an educationally sound move of its own merit," said board member Maryann Ross. Operating school buildings far below capacity leads to loss of educational opportunities for students, Ross told the Fairview parents two weeks ago.

Swim program now under way

All Farmington area swimming enthusiasts are invited to participate in recreational swimming sponsored by the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation department.

Swimming sessions are conducted from 7-9:15 p.m. at North Farmington High School, 3200 Shiawassee. And on Wednesdays at Farmington High School, 3200 Shiawassee. The swim program runs through March 22.

The fee for adults is 75 cents, while children and teens are admitted for 50 cents. Those under the age of 18 years must be out of the pool prior to 8:30 p.m.

Discount swim cards, which are good for 12 swims, are available for the winter session only through the recreation department. The price of the cards is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children and teens.

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