

Farmington Observer

Volume 90 Number 99

Thursday, September 27, 1979

Farmington, Michigan

108 Pages

Twenty-five cents

Salaries up \$3 million

Contract gets board approval

By MARY GNIEWEK
The Farmington school district will pay an additional \$3 million in teachers' salaries over the next two years. That's in keeping with a 9.5 percent pay increase specified in the new Farmington Education Association contract ratified Tuesday by the school board.

The seven-member board voted unanimously to accept the two-year pact which the districts' 770 teachers overwhelmingly approved by a 10 to 1 ratio earlier this month.

School finance director Bill Prisk said he had projected the salary cost at \$1,425,000 for each year of the contract.

"The settlement will cost us \$525,000 in addition to that," he said. "This is money over last year generated from property taxes."

The top half of the 11-step teacher salary scale, which is based on seniority, will receive the greatest increases. Teachers at the top of the scale with bachelor's degrees will earn \$2,028 over last year (\$21,523); with master's degrees, \$4,485 over last year (\$25,029).

At the bottom of the scale, there is a \$787 increase for teachers with bachelor's degrees (\$11,643), and a \$1,962 hike for teachers who have master's degrees (\$12,855).

In the second year of the contract,

teachers at the bottom of the scale with bachelor's degrees will earn \$12,633, with master's degrees, \$13,948. The top of the scale will earn \$23,352 (bachelors) and \$27,156 (masters).

The board also approved a 10-percent salary increase for substitute teachers, from \$30 to \$33 a day.

PRISK SAID it was unlikely the school board would levy additional millage this year to pay teacher salaries.

The district's \$30-million budget is generated primarily by 35.88 operating mills and 3.8 mills for debt reduction.

"The board does not levy more than it needs to operate the district. We did not levy our maximum this year,"

Prisk said.

An auditor's report presented by the accounting firm of Plante and Moran at the Tuesday night meeting showed 76.9 percent of the district's revenue is generated by property taxes. The remainder of funds come from state, federal and county governments.

Fifty seven and one half percent of the district's operating money was spent for teachers salaries this year. In 1978-79, the auditor's report showed actual expenditures within a half a percentage point of the projected budget.

"It's amazing to be that accurate. The administration should be commended," said accountant Frederick Hailer.



Alejandro and Maria Lopez, California farm workers, are in Farmington Hills promoting the United Farm Workers iceberg lettuce boycott. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Move to quash Freedom project gets only council lip service

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

A short-lived attempt to delay action on the proposed senior citizen low income housing project until after the Nov. 6 election received a lot of verbal action but little actual support at this week's Farmington Hills council session.

Even Councilman Joe Alkateeb, who had requested the proposal be put on the agenda, refused to make a motion to bring it to the floor.

"In private discussions (with councilmembers) I didn't find very much support. I don't want to waste the council's time," he said when the proposal came up for action.

The proposal, he said, was in reaction to last week's council action when the city's legislators put two advisory questions on the ballot asking voter opinion of senior and low income housing projects.

"It seems logical to at least to mean what we say," Alkateeb told the council.

Alkateeb's action was spurred by a request last week made by council candidate Donn Wolf. He suggested that council delay action on the controversial Freedom and Drake project until after the election.

"It just seems to follow logic to say you would pause to see what the people have to say," said Wolf.

Housing opponents fear the present council will carry through the legal work on the project before voter sentiment can be recorded and before a new council is elected.

The three top vote-getters in the primary — Wolf, William Lange and Jack Burwell — all were oppo-

Petitions submitted to reject ordinance

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Whether Farmington Hills residents vote on repeal of a zoning ordinance for multiple dwellings is up to the attorneys.

Attorneys for the city say it can't be done. Attorneys for Citizens for More Responsible Government (CMRG) disagree.

The showdown was spurred by CMRG petitions submitted Wednesday which call for an election on a zoning ordinance which smooths the way for construction of low-income housing at Freedom and Drake roads.

City council adopted the RC 2 multiple dwelling ordinance on Aug. 13. Opponents of that ordinance had

45 days to garner 3,000 signatures. CMRG submitted more than 5,600 names.

Mrs. Julicann Hovanessian, a CMRG leader, said the names were gathered by canvassing local shopping centers and by going door to door.

Mayor Earl Opperthaus, an attorney, says the group's legal position is "out in left field."

City Clerk Floyd Cairns has agreed that the petitions won't force an election.

"It is the opinion of our city attorney and the opinion of the attorney general that under the home rule act, they can't referend a change of zoning."

nents of the project. The Freedom-Drake housing project would provide 60 units for senior-citizen housing and 60 for low-income families.

The project would be backed up by bonds sold through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Rents would be subsidized through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Opponents disapprove of the MSHDA mandate which says the low-income family units must ac-

company senior citizen units.

But the council had little sympathy with the idea of delaying action until after November.

Although sympathizing with the proposal's sentiments, Councilwoman Jody Soronen said it would be dangerous to support it.

"I would worry that we would be painting ourselves into a corner which we couldn't extricate ourselves from," she said.

Mayor Earl Opperthaus was even more emphatic, saying the pro-

posal was meaningless because the council wasn't in any position to transfer the property, anyway.

Presently, the property in question is owned by the city. To put the motion in progress, it must be transferred to persons sponsoring the project.

Councilwoman Joanne Smith also rejected support of withholding action on the project, saying it would be a threat to the future of the senior citizen project.

"The land to be transferred is land intended for senior citizens. If we can't transfer it, then we are saying we aren't in favor of senior citizen housing," she said.

The land slated for development for low income housing isn't presently owned by the city. It is zoned for multiple dwellings.

"The land for the low income housing still would be zoned for multiple dwellings, even if we don't go with the senior citizen project," she said.

"If you want guarantees that we have a say in this project, this is the best way to do it," she said, referring to the present council plan.

The only candidate who totally supported the council in rejecting the stop-gap proposal was Michael O'Hair.

"I hope the council sticks by its guns," he said.

He noted that any delay in action would cause a rise in the project's cost; throw negotiations between MSHDA, the private developer and the city into chaos; give a bad name to the city; and delay an "already delayed housing project for low income seniors and families."

Farm workers hit the road for boycott

By MARY GNIEWEK
Their message is simple. They want consumers to boycott California-grown iceberg head lettuce.

For \$15 a week, the Lopez family of the Salinas valley, California, farm workers and union activists, drove 3,000 miles to spread the word.

Alejandro and Maria and their 13-year-old son Carlos have been house guests of Mexican-American Maria Runk of Farmington Hills for the past three weeks.

They have spread their message to church groups, worked on a billboard campaign that will soon be sprouting up around Detroit, and opened a boycott information center in Pontiac.

They will stay in Michigan until the California lettuce strike is over.

"We want to tell people not to buy non-union California head lettuce," Lopez said.

"The growers spray harmful pesticides in the fields, then send workers out just a few hours later. We've had about 20 people in the hospital, sick from the chemicals."

"With a contract, there will be better enforcement on spraying."

Added his wife: "We have other benefits with contracts, medical and pension plans and laws against young children working in the fields. The contract ensures the workers are paid their rate."

MRS. LOPEZ SPENT part of her childhood as a migrant worker, living "under the trees" and once in a chicken coop before her parents settled in Delano, Calif., also the home of United Farm Workers organizer Cesar Chavez.

"My parents became members of the farm workers association," Mrs. Lopez said. "Cesar helped us with labor contractors."

After the Lopez's were married and working as grape pickers, Chavez intervened in their behalf when almost half their combined \$120 a week salary was being withheld by growers.

"Cesar got us our money," Lopez said.



MARIA RUNK

Since then, the Lopez's have dedicated much time to United Farm Workers causes. Before the union sent them to Michigan, Mrs. Lopez was preparing to open a credit union for farm workers while her husband attended a union organizing school.

Both have marched for union causes and participated in other product boycotts.

"We met Maria (Mrs. Runk) when we were here in 1973 for the Gallo grape boycott. She was a supporter and we have known her since then," Lopez said.

Mrs. Runk works at the United Farm Workers boycott office in Detroit.

"Being a Mexican American, this is an important issue to me," Mrs. Runk said. "This country has been good to me, but at a cost to other people."

"I'D LIKE TO see Carlos (the Lopez's son) grow up with a great education and a great future," she said.

Mrs. Lopez completed just the eighth grade before she was back working in the fields full time.

"When they left California, there were 30 contracts unsettled," Mrs. Runk said. "After a week on the road, only 15 contracts were unsigned."

Accident victims identified

Farmington Hills police have identified from forensic tests and dental records the body of Brenda Lee Thompson, 15, of Farmington who died in a fiery crash in the early hours of Sept. 22 on Haggerty and Grand River.

Also dead is Mark J. Williams, 17, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Thompson of Farmington. The driver of the car, he was a senior at Farmington High School where Brenda also attended school.

The bodies were removed from the wreckage of a yellow two-door 1966 Buick. Police say the Buick was hit by an 18-wheel tractor-trailer hauling steel on eastbound Grand River.

Police surmise the Buick was hit as it went through a traffic light at 2:45 a.m. The Buick was northbound on Haggerty.

The driver of the tractor-trailer, Hubert Coyelle, 40, of Fort Wayne, Ind., is listed in serious condition at Botsford Hospital, Farmington Hills.

The victims were among 18 persons who died in traffic accidents that week-end in Michigan.



Gridiron disco

Dancing around the gridiron was the theme for the day when Harrison Hawks took on Northville last Saturday. Here, Hawk Reggie Upshaw (87) (right) leaps toward the goal line to score a winning touchdown.

Pursuing him are Steve Cornalino (21) and Ken Weber (20). To read more about the game, turn to the Sports sections. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

inside

Classified Ads Sections E, F
Community Calendar 3C
Editorial Opinion 16A
Entertainment Section B
Feature Angles 3A
Inquiries 2A
Obituaries Section B
Sports Section C
Suburban Life Section C

MONEY!

Make it easy with a classified ad. Just advertise your extras in our paper then sit back and be ready for a buyer. The wait won't be long since our want ad section reaches more than 150,000 suburban homes twice each week. You'll be pleased to see how easy classified can make it.

644-1070