

Farmington Observer

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Twenty-five cents

Safety officers renew contract with the city

By Jean Adamczak
staff writer

A new 12.25-percent salary increase for Farmington Public Safety Officers will cost the city an additional \$86,000 in personnel costs over the next three years.

Negotiations between the city and the 16-member Public Safety Officers Association resulted in the new three-year contract retroactive to July 1, 1984 through June 30, 1987. Farmington city council members approved the new contract at their meeting last Monday night.

Effective January 1, 1985, the agree-

ment calls for a 4-percent increase the first year, raising the salary of public safety officers from \$26,727 to \$27,798.

The salary for an officer temporarily taking the place of a shift commander (classified as a public safety officer I) will increase from \$27,587 to \$28,690 the first year.

Following the first increase, a 2.5-percent increase will be effective Jan. 1, 1986 and a 5.75-percent increase the third year effective Jan. 1, 1987 for both public safety officers and public safety officers I.

"This is a 9.3-percent increase over current personnel costs, which is an av-

erage increase of 3.1 percent per year over the term of the contract," says City Manager Robert Deadman.

Previously represented by the Teamsters Local 219, the public safety officers elected to leave the union and represent themselves through the Public Safety Officers Association (PSOA).

"WE FELT we could better represent ourselves because we know of our own problems better than they (Teamsters) do," explains patrolman Joseph Schornack, president of the PSOA.

"We couldn't get a hold of them (Teamsters) when we wanted to, so we took a vote among ourselves and decided to form our own organization."

This year negotiations began in May. "Negotiations went a lot quicker this time, we had six or eight meetings," said Schornack, "and without the Teamsters in there we had a lesser amount of people to organize."

The officers gave up their cost-of-living benefits in order to receive better retirement benefits, says Schornack.

Changes in retirement eligibility made under the new contract, enable officers to retire at age 50 after 25 years of service. Previously, officers could not retire until age 55 with 25 years of service.

"The removal of the cost-of-living provision could save the city up to \$300 per officer in the future should inflation return," says Deadman.

Another condition of the contract establishes a more permanent shift schedule for officers.

Officers currently change from days, afternoons and midnights on a weekly basis. New shift arrangements will permit an officer to remain on the same shift for an 18-week period.

The old scheduling system had been in operation for over 13 years, Schornack said, adding that it "is not good for the force and not good on your home life."

Minimum fire callback pay was reduced from three hours at time-and-a-half pay to two hours at the same pay rate. An officer is now deemed to be on duty when responding to a fire callback from his place of residency.

Officers were "satisfied" with the overall contract which is comparable to that of communities similar in population with the same number of officers, says Schornack.

"This office believes that the contract is equitable as it provides for modest increases over a three-year period and at the same time provides for some cost saving provisions," Deadman said.

Trial date set for fire chief

By Joanne Malazewski
staff writer

Former Farmington Hills Fire Chief Lawrence Karon will stand trial next month on a charge of embezzlement of \$100 or less, a misdemeanor.

The jury trial is scheduled before 47th District Judge Margaret Schaeffer at 9 a.m. Oct. 24. At his arraignment in August, Karon stood mute on the charge. A plea of not guilty was entered for him.

A police investigation into a break-in at a Farmington Hills fire station led to Karon's arrest in August.

The misdemeanor carries a penalty of 90 days in jail, a \$100 fine or both upon conviction.

While police were investigating the firehouse burglary during which \$120-\$130 was taken, other information concerning another amount of cash which was not accounted for surfaced, according to Police Chief John Nichols in August.

The investigation into the firehouse break-in is continuing, said Sgt. John Kohls. But police have no suspects or new leads, he said.

At the time of Karon's arrest in August, Nichols said that there was no connection between the firehouse break-in

and the charge against Karon.

KARON RESIGNED his office about one week before his arrest.

The announcement of Karon's resignation came in a press release from Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick.

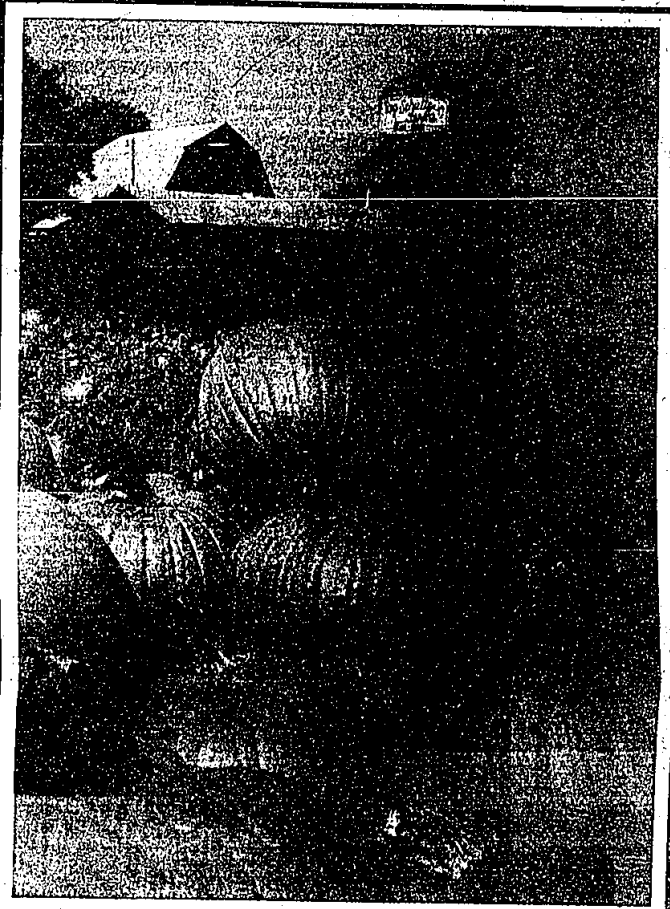
Although the press release said Karon's resignation was based "on personal matters of health," Costick a week later said Karon resigned "of his own volition" after returning "the sum of money that was inappropriately handled."

At that time, Costick, who was contacted at a conference in Northern Michigan, said: "There was a cloud over some funds. The funds could have been lost or stolen. At any rate, they were under his care. And the fact is that there was a sum of money missing."

"With that cloud there, I think Larry (Karon) felt that the thing he should do was clear up the cloud. The sum of money that was unaccounted for he returned to the city."

Until a new chief is named, Lt. Richard Marinucci is the acting chief.

Applications are being sought until Oct. 1 to fill the vacant position. Following interviews of candidates, council is required to confirm whomever Costick appoints to the position.



'Tis the season

No sooner did summer slip away in the night who gazes over his crop of pumpkins which than fall dropt in with all the accompanying have a number of seasonal fates: pies, breads or signs of autumn. Just ask farmer Roy Schultz just a scary old pumpkin face in the night.

Family business tradition comes to a halt

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The owner called it "a low blow." To one of his employees, it's "a sad story."

A customer added that it's "just terrible." These expressions of sorrow concern

the plight of a small, family-run automobile dealership — Bill Hermann Renault of Farmington Hills — which, barring a financial miracle, will go out of business at the end of the month after 11 years in Farmington Hills.

American Motors Corp., which merged with the French auto maker Renault in 1978, has refused to renew

Hermann's franchise because its cramped showroom and service facilities don't meet company standards, according to Dave Hermann, who owns the dealership with his brother, Bill Hermann Jr.

And efforts to find larger quarters at a "prudent price" have been unsuccessful, Dave Hermann said last Thursday.

The Renault franchise, Dave Hermann added, will be shifted to Bob Saks, a large Farmington Hills dealership which already stocks Oldsmobiles, Toyotas, Jeeps and AMC autos.

"We've been fighting AMC for quite a few years on this," said Dave Hermann over the sounds of a video tape extolling the virtues of Renault Fuegos and Alliances to an empty showroom.

"Originally, they came to us and said our building wasn't big enough, so we agreed to enlarge the building. Then, they said they wanted more property. It's hard to come up with a second piece of property that's affordable."

HERMANN'S BUILDING, occupying just under 4,000 square feet, sits on property which measures 200 by 200 feet on 10 Mile Road just east of Orchard Lake Road.

Four compact Renaults are crammed into the tiny showroom, and the service area can accommodate six cars.

Hermann's new car stock, about 65 autos parked on the east side of the building, will be purchased by AMC, according to Dave Hermann.

The Hermanns looked into purchasing the property now occupied by Tom Holzer Ford on Grand River in Farmington (the Ford agency soon will move to 10 Mile and Hagerty roads), but the deal fell through.

Another factor in AMC's decision to move the franchise, Dave Hermann said, is that the dealership sells only Renaults. It has been affiliated with the French auto for the past 17 years. "They (AMC) wanted a full-line dealership in this area," he said.

"This is one of the few dealerships I've been to where they know you and take an active interest in you. At a lot of places, you're just a number."

— Bill Egypt
Bill Hermann customer

Asked to comment on the Hermann franchise, John McCandless, director of marketing and sales for AMC, said, "... If Bill Hermann has plans to make a move, he'll have to tell you about it himself."

The news of the closing spread gloom over the dealership, which employs 12 people.

"Bad thing is that most of our em-

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FANDY BORNST/Staff photographer

Mechanics Bill Hermann (left) and Elmer Schuetz ponder their future without the help of employment, Bill Hermann Renault in Farmington Hills.

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