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Clerk reinstated following hearings

By DAN McCOSH
FARMINGTON HILLS—Mrs. Debbie Roberts, the police clerk-typist who allegedly first discovered an embezzlement of funds in the department has been offered a city job back by the personnel committee which heard her case.

Under the ruling handed down by the three-man committee Monday evening, the 29-year-old former typist for Public Safety Director Ronald Holko will get some employment with the city in her old classification, but probably not with the police department.

She also will lose 25 days in pay, the time between her alleged dis-

missal and the time she begins work, according to Committee Chairman Mrs. Joan Dudley. "She made an error in judgment," Mrs. Dudley said, "She discussed the matter with several people, not just Lt. Kelly, before it was reported."

ATTORNEY FOR Mrs. Roberts, Robert Zack, said Tuesday afternoon no decision has been made whether to appeal the loss of pay.

The hearing was the first personnel grievance to be heard in the new city of Farmington Hills. It was also one of the first to be

heard under a recently-approved contract with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union.

City Attorney Paul Biebeau, who represented the city in the case, had no recollection of a similar suspension or hearing in the past, either with the city or the township.

The case was one of two being heard along with the investigation of the embezzlement itself.

A police hearing on Lt. William Kelly, the policeman suspended during the investigation for his actions in filing a report, is still underway.

MRS. ROBERTS had originally submitted a letter of resignation, then said she was actually fired.

The director charged her with several violations of department rules after she appealed to the union.

The city's case was based mainly on her actions following her discovery of allegedly altered receipts in a file kept in the director's office.

The receipts were part of the director's confidential files, Holko maintained during the hearing. Mrs. Roberts testified she felt since she had deposited the re-

ceipts in the files, she had the right to have access to them.

Additional testimony was heard concerning the number of people who had heard the story of the alleged embezzlement before it was officially reported.

At one point in the testimony, Director Holko said the report would have to come directly to his office, or the clerk was violating department rules.

"If she suspected me, she could go to the city manager, but she has to document it," Holko said.

None of the testimony implied

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MRS. DEBBIE ROBERTS

Police investigation complete—McConnell

By CARL STODDARD

FARMINGTON—In a report on the recent embezzlement within the Farmington Hills Police Department, Mayor Robert McConnell said the investigation was handled "competently and thoroughly."

The embezzlement of an estimated \$1,900 in department funds resulted in the arrest of Fran Lane, 27, of Howell. Mrs. Lane, the former executive secretary for Public Safety Director Ronald Holko, was arraigned recently on charges of embezzling \$700 from the police department over a six month period.

"I'm satisfied that the investigation has been conducted properly," McConnell said during the city council meeting April 8.

He said the investigation was conducted by the head of the Farmington Hills detective bureau and a member of the Farmington Hills police.

McConnell said that the State Police were called in at the request of the city.

McConnell also noted that procedures for handling monies within the department have been changed.

"Only one employe was involved, apparently," McConnell said, and added that the missing funds will be recovered.

Dr. Richard P. Horsch, 28197 Alyce Kay, Farmington Hills

asked the council why, if an arrest has been made, police Lt. William Kelly was still suspended.

Kelly was suspended by Holko for his handling of the case. Holko stated earlier that Kelly "released confidential information on the investigation" in filing his report, a violation of department rules.

McConnell said Kelly's suspension is the subject of hearings, conducted by three members of the city council.

Councilman Earl Opperhauser said that when the hearings are completed, a full explanation of the suspension and the trial board's findings will be made public.

A hearing is also underway for Mrs. Debbie Roberts, the clerk who apparently first discovered the embezzlement.

Mrs. Roberts said she was appealing for her involvement and is asking the dismissal.

Councilman wants combined police

FARMINGTON HILLS—Farmington Hills councilman Earl Opperhauser proposed a joint Farmington-Farmington Hills police and fire department at Monday's council meeting.

"We really don't need two separately directed police and fire departments," Opperhauser said.

He pointed out that money and duplicated effort could be saved by the unification of the departments. Opperhauser said, he also recognized the political and union problems connected with the unification.

Another problem that would have to be resolved, he said, was

how to handle unification of the one police-fire department in the City of Farmington with the separate police and fire departments in the Hills.

Mayor Robert McConnell said he felt it would be best to rely on the city managers of the two cities to help direct the unification.

Councilman Frederick Lichman suggested the matter be scheduled for the joint upcoming meeting of the city councils.

The council voted 6-1 to put it on the agenda. Council member Mrs. Joan Dudley dissented.

No date has been set for the meeting.



A discovery

Tami Cooksey, 3, of 21698 Roosevelt, ignores the big white rabbit at Saturday's egg hunt in favor of a few chocolate eggs. The hunt in the city park

drew several hundred children. It was sponsored by the Farmington Jaycees. (photo by Fran Evert)

Farmington store robbed at gunpoint

FARMINGTON—An undetermined amount of cash was taken during an armed robbery at Lawson's Party Store, 20760 Farmington Road shortly after noon Monday, April 8.

According to the Farmington police, a man entered the store with what appeared to be a gun in the left pocket of his jacket.

The man ordered two employes to the floor of the store and then removed an unknown amount in

bills and change from the cash register, police said.

After taking the money, the store employes said the man walked out of the store and headed north on Farmington Road.

Police said the man was described as a white male in his early 20s with brown hair and eyes and wearing a blue, waist length jacket.

Police are investigating.

Ice rink action delayed by Hills

FARMINGTON HILLS—A proposed ice rink for the northeast corner of Drake and Freedom roads ran into a stumbling block at the Farmington Hills City Council.

The council voted to postpone a hearing on the rezoning request until the planning commission can study the entire area. The study was scheduled to be completed within two months.

The ice rink proponents have requested a zoning change from residential to business (B-3).

The study will involve the area south of the City of Farmington.

The rezoning was denied by the planning commission March 14.



A quiet hill in the Holy Land

On a hillside overlooking Jerusalem, two shepherds tend their flock. The pastoral scene, virtually unchanged in thousands of years, seems especially significant at Easter time. Easter this year, falls on April 14. It remains a time of religious and spiritual renewal for Christians throughout the world.

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Offices to close
 The switchboard and offices of The Observer & Eccentric will be closed to the public from noon until 3 p.m. Good Friday, April 12.