

## County approves budget during marathon session

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

In one of its longest meetings in recent years, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners approved a 1978 budget totaling nearly \$74.8 million.

Much of the Thursday marathon, which began at 9:30 a.m. and lasted until nearly 7 p.m., was devoted to arguments over lower-level pay increases. At one point, Finance Committee Chairman Paul Kasper (R-Bloomfield Hills) introduced 16 separate amendments calling for changes in the pay scales of employees ranging from the chief deputy clerk to the chief of golf course operations. And a familiar argument broke out when commissioners decided to pay several appointed aides of County Executive Daniel T. Murphy more than most elected department heads will get.

AS APPROVED, the budget is more than \$1.1 million above what Murphy asked in his Nov. 3 budget message—recommendations he half-heartedly characterized as "hold the line"—and more than \$340,000 above the finance committee's recommendations.

The "line" seemed to be held on expansion of county services, and general pay increases were handed out. All non-union county workers received six per cent pay hikes, and some were also given special "equity" increases.

The largest increases went to top levels of the administration.

Murphy saw his own salary rise from \$47,250 to \$52,448—a total increase of 11 per cent.

Murphy's right-hand men—William Spinelli, executive officer for operations and Patrick Nowak, executive officer for administration—saw their present salaries, \$37,118, raised to more than \$38,300.

Two members of Murphy's executive staff, James M. Brennan, director of management and budget, and Robert E. Chisholm, director of public services, got 11.3 per cent raises. Their salaries jumped from \$34,997 to \$38,952.

The county executive's four other "super department" heads—James P. Dunkel, director of personnel; Milton Handorf, director of public works; Glen Dick, director of central services; and Leroy Volberding, director of human services—had their pay increased from \$34,997 to \$37,096.

### COMMISSIONER

James Doyon (D-Royal Oak), who repeatedly blasted the administration and some members of the board for the size of the raises, called the situation "paradoxical."

"Here they are giving 10 and 11 per cent increases that are turning into \$5,000 and \$6,000 last year when were negotiating (with the unions) the county executive had the audacity to propose a 2.3 per cent increase," Doyon said.

All members of Murphy's upper echelons will be paid more than most high-ranking elected officials. The sheriff, the treasurer, the county clerk and the drain commissioner had their salaries increased from \$31,401 to \$33,286.

Only Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson breaks the mold. His salary jumped from \$38,588 to \$40,902, second only to Murphy.

The board also, by a 19-5 vote approved a six per cent salary increase for all non-union county employees.

The proposal met stiff opposition from some of the board's Democrats.

Commissioners Lawrence Pernick (D-Southfield), chairman of the Democratic caucus, said the six per cent package would be seen by unionized employees as an attack on labor.

"We're telling our non-union people that they better stay non-union and not organize," Pernick said.

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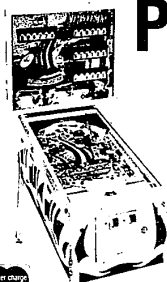
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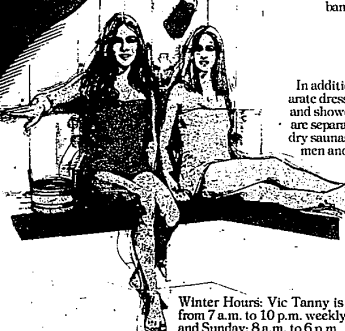
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