

Schoolcraft trustees deadlock on when to ask 0.8 mill tax hike

By TIM RICHARD

Schoolcraft College trustees Wednesday night deadlocked on when to hold an election to ask for a property tax increase.

At press time, of debate, the board had defeated motions 1 to hold a special election April 2 and 2 to seek the millage increase at the regular June 13 election for school board members and college trustees.

As of 11 p.m., no election date had been agreed upon.

Board Treasurer Nancie Blatt, who a week ago appeared to be the fifth (majority) vote in favor of an April 2 election, suddenly switched Wednesday night and abstained. With only four board members favoring April 2, there was no longer a majority.

MRS. BLATT was swayed by arguments that a special election would cost the college district \$60,000, about \$2 a vote or more.

Other trustees, however, argued it would be political suicide to seek a tax increase at the regular June 13 election, when such K-12 districts as Garden City and Plymouth might also be seeking approval of money questions. Experience has shown Schoolcraft's chances of getting a millage passed are slim if K-12 districts are also seeking millages.

Supporting an April 2 vote were board Chairman Paul Y. Kadish and trustees Leroy Bennett, Gerald Cox and Mark McQueen.

Favoring June 13 were Mrs. Blatt, Vice-chairperson Rosina Raymond and trustee Ron Cowden.

Trustee Arch Vallier, the board's eighth member, was absent. He had previously indicated he favored June 13, which still would have given that date only four votes.

A week earlier, trustees were fairly solidly in favor of asking voter approval of 0.8 mills (80 cents per \$1,000 of state equalized property valuation).

BECAUSE STATE LAWS governing community college financing have grown complex over the years, Schoolcraft's millage structure sometimes appears to be a maze of different rates. In the simplest terms, this is how the maze unfolds:

The voters have approved 1.77 all-purpose mills (\$1.77 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation), which is used for operating and debt service. The college also levies about one-third of an unvoted mill for debt service. Total rate is currently 2.10 mills.

If voters approve on April 2, the college will be authorized a voted rate of 2.57 mills. In addition, the board figures it will have to levy some unvoted millage to a total of 3.3 mills by 1981-2.

The 0.8 mills on the ballot would be used to finance existing programs as well as new programs that would go in new buildings. The board would float a \$10 million bond issue for the new buildings.

Thus, the people will be voting only on all-purpose millage that would be mainly for operating, not on the bond issue. But the board feels there would be no sense in the college's selling bonds to put up buildings if voters declined to approve a tax hike to operate the buildings.

VOTERS REJECTED a 0.53-mill proposal last June 14, and so the board asked Kenneth Lindner, financial vice-president, why 0.8 mills are needed now for essentially the same plan.

"First, we have a different tax base," said Lindner. "We're now projecting a six per cent growth of the tax base (all taxable property in the district) instead of an eight per cent growth."

President C. Nelson Grote noted that K-12 enrollments are tending to level but added: "We don't depend only on high school students (new graduates) for our future students."

"In the campaign," said Kadish, "we can be precise—these are the needs." That list of new structures includes:

1977-8: A culinary arts addition, \$545,000.

1979-80: A fine arts building, \$3.85 million.

1980-1: A learning resources center, \$2.2 million.

1980-1: An Applied Sciences addition, \$1.7 million.

1981-2: An addition to the Waterman Campus Center, \$1.24 million.

1981-2: A facility in Canton Township, \$1.25 million.

And Trustee Gerald Cox concluded: "I haven't seen anything more going up at Schoolcraft in the four years I've been here. I say let's go through with it."

John Hoeller is Hudson chief

John Hoeller of Farmington Hills has been promoted to vice-president, general manager of Hudson's Northland store. Hoeller returns to Hudson's from Dayton Hudson's Properties, where he held the position of vice-president, shopping center operations, eastern region.

Prior to joining Dayton Hudson in 1975, he was part of Hudson's management, joining the company in 1972 as assistant to the vice-president, operations.

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