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Radio course is finished

Marine Pfc. Douglas Laskosky, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Laskosky, 3025 Stetson Dr., Farmington Hills has completed the radio repair course at the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School in California. A 1975 graduate of Farmington High School, he learned to operate, maintain and repair the radio equipment currently used by Marine Corps ground units.

Board hears news on open meetings

By LYNN ORR

Meetings of public bodies behind closed doors will be difficult beginning April 1 when Michigan's new open meeting law goes into effect. To familiarize themselves with the law, members of the Farmington School Board invited Dr. Roger Boline of the Michigan Department of Education and attorney Richard Kroppnick to an open study session Tuesday night.

Boline quoted from a 35-page opinion of Atty. Gen. Frank Kelly in detailing the complexities of the law. "The opinion of the attorney general, in the absence of a court case, is what we are going by, as far as the interpretation of education is concerned," said Boline.

All meetings of governmental bodies must be open, with few exceptions, said Boline. Most of the discussion centered on calling closed sessions. There are two ways in which a closed session may be called.

Upon a two-thirds roll call vote of the members of a public body, a closed meeting may be held for the following reasons: 1) to consider the purchase or lease of real property up to the time an option to purchase or lease that real property is obtained; 2) to consult with its attorneys regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation, but only when an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the public body; 3) to review the specific contents of an application for employment when the candidate requests that the application remain confidential; and 4) to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal law.

"In other words, preventive medicine, if you will, is no more," said Kroppnick. "If the board desires consultation with its attorney, it must be done in an open meeting unless it would adversely financially affect litigation in process."

"And all final board action has to be done in a public meeting," said Kroppnick. "I think that's specifically what this legislation is designed to prevent."

CLOSED SESSIONS MAY BE HELD without a two-thirds roll call vote for the following reasons: 1) to consider the dismissal, suspension, or discipline of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual agent, when the named person requests a closed hearing; 2) to consider the dismissal, suspension, or discipline of a student when the public body is part of the school district, intermediate school district or institution of higher education which the student is attending, when the student or student's parent or guardian requests a closed hearing; 3) for strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement, when either negotiating party requests a closed hearing; and 4) partisan caucuses of members of the state legislature.

Minutes must be taken at closed sessions, Kroppnick said, although the law states that they can only be released by a court decision and may be destroyed after one year.

Board members were especially concerned about how to call a closed meeting and the specificity of naming the reason.

Although the law doesn't spell out what kind of reason must be stated, Kroppnick believes the board should be specific without announcing the name of a person who has requested a closed session, in the case of discipline or charges.

"I WOULD FEEL more comfortable if the board was somewhat specific," he said. "This act was formed to prevent all public bodies from deciding things behind closed doors."

Board members were surprised that consideration of discipline in the case of teachers or students could only be done in a closed meeting at the request of the student or teacher. The board is not empowered, under this law, to request a closed session itself.

Strategy and negotiation sessions must be open unless either negotiating party requests a closed session, he added.

THE RECODIFICATION of the Michigan school district code was also discussed by Boline. The major problem with the new code recently passed by the state legislature, he said, is the mandating of a census.

"It's up to the board to make a regular type of census or an alternative method," he said, but a census must be taken at least each alternate year, providing the intermediate school district with the name, address and age of each student living in the district.

Business Mgr. William Prisk quipped that it might be cheaper for the district to pay the penalty rather than carry the financial burden of the legislature's latest idea.

Boline hopes the law can be changed to avoid the expense and difficulty of administering the census, but until then, he advised the audience to prepare for a census-taking venture this spring.

Husband arraigned on shooting charge

A \$20,000 bond has been set for a Farmington man who was arraigned before Judge Margaret Schaeffer March 21 in connection with the attempted shooting of his wife.

Bernard McKee, 50, of 3279 Leelanau, Farmington was charged with assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and with the use of a firearm in committing a felony.

Police say Mrs. Barbara McKee, 42, was in the kitchen of her home March 19 when a .32 caliber revolver was fired at point blank range. The shot missed Mrs. McKee but she suffered powder burns on her shoulder.

The attempted shooting occurred after an argument between Mrs. McKee and her estranged husband, a Farmington police spokesman said. The couple's two teen-age sons restrained their father during the argument.

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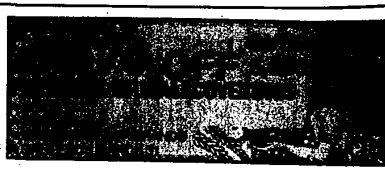
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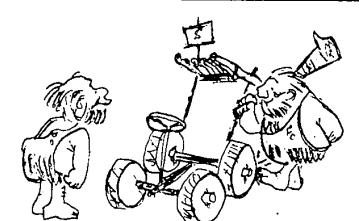


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