

Murphy calls him usurper

Patterson gives raises, gets flak

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson and County Executive Daniel T. Murphy are at odds again.

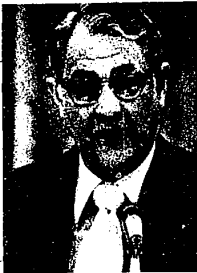
Murphy is seething over Patterson's recent actions raising the salaries of 27 assistant prosecutors.

Murphy, who previously argued that the prosecutor's office should not get any new staffing, said Patterson's actions were irresponsible and set a dangerous precedent.

The 27 assistant prosecutors were given raises which did not conform to an established salary schedule.

In speaking to the Republican caucus of the county board of commissioners last week, Murphy said it should be the administration's duty to set the salaries for county employees. The county commissioners must approve Patterson's salary recommendations.

The salary increases total more than



DANIEL T. MURPHY
Bad practices

\$4,500. The increases, however, would not cost the county any new money



L. BROOKS PATTERSON
Big raises.

because a number of unfilled vacancies had already been funded in

the current budget. The raises would mean that the vacancies would continue to go unfilled.

If Patterson would have followed the salary schedule, though, the increase would total \$48,800—\$35,700 less.

THE DISPUTE is complex, and the administration and commissioners say the effects will be far-reaching.

Commissioner Dennis Murphy (R-Nowi) said allowing Patterson's recommended raises to be approved unchallenged would "eliminate any sound budget practices."

The county executive and other commissioners add that allowing Patterson to arbitrarily hand out raises would allow other elected county officials to ignore the set salary scale when giving raises to county employees not bound by the county's "Merit System."

THE EXECUTIVE AND commissioners are in a quandary, though, because Patterson apparently violated no policy by ignoring the established salary schedule.

"Brooks (Patterson) didn't move through the proper increments," said Commissioner Robert McConnell (R-Farmington Hills), "but there's nothing there that said he had to go through the proper increments."

Commissioner Henry W. Hoot (R-Troy) supported that contention. "He's taken an unusually large number of people and placed them at the top of the salary scale. There are just no established guidelines to prevent it. Brooks went through proper channels."

Cultural council will get paid boss

Marlowe Belanger of Farmington Hills will become the first paid coordinator of the Oakland County Cultural Council.

The county board of commissioners last week approved a contract with Mrs. Belanger, 28-4. The contract is effective until Dec. 31.

The proposal to fund the coordinator position, which had been a volunteer effort, ran into early opposition. Some

commissioners argued that the job should remain voluntary.

"When you talk about coordinating, it can be done by a volunteer," said Commissioner Henry W. Hoot (R-Troy). "You can go to any three blocks of Birmingham and find enough volunteers."

Despite Hoot's protests, the board overwhelmingly approved the \$3,500 contract. The proposal gained support

when it was revealed that \$3,350 would be provided by a grant from the Michigan Council for the Arts. The remainder will come from the cultural council's budget, which is funded by the county.

Commissioners voting to approve the contract included Robert McConnell (R-Farmington Hills), John McDonald (R-Farmington), Lillian Moffitt (R-Bloomfield Township),

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