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Pay raise commotion hits at city manager

By LYNN ORR

Payroll once again is a problem in Farmington Hills.

This time salary hikes of between 7-12 per cent for non-union employees in the engineering department are inciting charges of foul play from other non-union employees and Hills councilmembers.

Despite City Mgr. George Majors' protests to the contrary, a majority of councilmembers say they were unaware that non-union employees in the engineering department received more than the stipulated five per cent raise hikes.

Mayor Jan Dolan, however, contradicted her fellow councilmembers. She indicated she was aware that engineers received a higher raise than the council mandated in June. She did say she was not aware of the specific percentage increases.

"I knew some of the non-union personnel were getting more," Mayor Dolan said. "We only directed our comments to the one page we had with us."

In June the council voted in a split decision to hold the line on raises to five per cent for about 20 non-union employees, including directors, department heads, and executive secretaries. Council also allowed four exceptions to that rule in cases where pay was inequitable, she added. The engineers were not among the exceptions approved by council.

"We just decided we had to hold the line someplace," she said.

HOWEVER, COUNCILMEMBERS

Joe Alkateeb, Keith Deacon, Catherine Jones, Joanne Smith, and Jody Soronen said they were unaware that salaries in the engineering department had jumped between 7-12 per cent in the 1978-79 budget.

They all stipulated that they would not have approved the submitted budgets for the department if they had been aware of the increases.

"In my book, I wouldn't have given the engineering department any raises," Alkateeb said. Councilman Earl Oppenheimer was out of town and could not be reached for comment.

Several of the councilmembers said that when they voted to hold the line on raises at five per cent for the non-union employees, they assumed Majors knew they were including all non-union personnel in that salary cap. The council traditionally only reviews individual salaries for a minority of the non-union employees, according to Majors.

He said he went over the engineering salaries "countless" times with the council in budget sessions. However, at that time, salaries for all non-union employees were set to be raised by seven per cent.

IN JUNE, though, the council mandated a five per cent cap, which Majors fought, warning the council that raises lower than those set for union employees would affect morale among the non-union personnel.

Majors stated the council knew there were employees receiving more than the five per cent hike.

When asked if Majors had discussed the issue with the council,

councilmember Smith replied: "If he did, he did it in his usual doubletalk. He goes on and on and on, and by the time he gets through, I'm not sure what he's said. I don't believe he actually stated that he was raising the engineers more than the five per cent at any time."

Soronen and Jones both indicated that their first budget had been difficult but agreed that would not have approved higher raises for non-union personnel selectively, other than the approved exceptions.

Deacon said that under the circumstances, he would not have approved the raises when others were getting five per cent.

Of 18 non-union employees in the engineering department, only Tom Bissell, department supervisor, and Alex Moiseff, recently transferred into the department, received five per cent salary increases. Of 14 other employees, the salaries of four employees jumped 11.75 per cent, while two others received 10.54 increases. The other salaries were hiked about seven per cent.

A CHANGE in salary schedule is responsible for the salary increases of more than seven per cent. Majors said. The schedules, according to Majors, were negotiated during 14 months the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The majority of Hills employees are members of AFSCME.

The engineers voted to decertify from the union in January 1978 before the first contract had been negotiated. "Since they were then non-union, we instituted a salary schedule which was comparable to union schedules," Majors said. The engineers also received raises in February, since they had not received raises in 1977, Majors indicated.

The salary increases of between 7-12 per cent set for the 1978-79 budget were additional adjustments for 1978, according to payroll records.

Salary schedules for engineering and the department of public services, both under Ralph Magid, Director of Public Services, are the only schedules set for non-union employees in Farmington Hills.

ASKED WHAT he would do to prevent such situations in the future, Alkateeb stated that he would make sure Majors kept his promises to the council in the future.



You can hardly pass a lake these days without seeing a swarm of bright sailboats and tanned sailors. Last week, Matt Swayze and Maureen Vachon of

Bloomfield Hills found the sailing smooth. But marine officials say it is not always so. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

Breezing along

Sailing is Michiganders' delight

By SUZIE MARKS

In the midst of warm weather and summer breezes, brightly colored mainsails, jibs and spinnakers catch the wind and send sailors across lakes.

Michigan residents have hundreds of inland lakes to sail on. Water is never too far away. Neither is danger.

"It's hard to tell people to use common sense, but they have to if they want to avoid accidents," says Bing Eberhart, assistant superintendent at Soney Creek Metro Park. "Ninety percent of the drownings are because of lack of common sense."

Stoney Creek and Kensington are sailors' parks, because they limit the speed of motorboats to 10 m.p.h., discouraging speed boating and water skiing.

"By and large the boating public is a nice group to deal with but we always get that five to 10 per cent who don't want to cooperate," Eberhart says.

ADVISING NEW SAILORS to take a safe sailing course, Eberhart recommends the U.S. Coast Guard classes offered through public school systems in the winter.

However, he adds that experience is the best teacher and the best teacher is an experienced sailor.

"A new sailor should find someone

who knows how to sail and will show them the ropes," Eberhart says.

At Kensington, boat rental clerk Mike Thomas finds new sailors having difficulty getting back to shore. Because of shifting winds on the lake, many inexperienced sailors don't know how to maneuver their boats if the wind is not directly behind the craft.

"They have to know how to tack in order to get back to the launch," Thomas says.

By the customer's request, a mini sailing lesson is given to the novice. "We set the sail, and if they want us to we will give them a lesson," Thomas says.

AFTER RENTING a boat several times, many are ready to take the big plunge and buy their own sailboat. Along with summer fun, sailors devote many hours to swabbing decks and keeping their crafts in ship shape.

"The most common accident sailors

have is hanging their boats into the docks and scrapping the paint," says Lindy Rymill, manager of Avon Sails in Rochester. "Then they have to paint them if they want to take the time."

Avon reports 60 to 80 percent of their customers are first-time sailors. The shop offers several starter boats for families or individuals.

Without hesitation, Ms. Rymill recommends the novice sailor head for Stoney Creek.

"It has good launching, steady breezes and the water is warm in case they tip over," she says.

For small boats, Ms. Rymill says sailing lessons are necessary, but suggests reading "This is Sailing."

It's well-illustrated and can be read from cover to cover and the person can understand it," she adds.

The biggest mistake a new sailor can make, Ms. Rymill says, is failure to wear a life jacket. "If they don't wear one, they're just stupid."



Ann Skotcher sits in one of her rooms at the Revere. Family cat Minkee keeps her company. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

Motel

Strange tales to tell

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

The minister walked into the motel office accompanied by another man and a woman and requested a room for a couple of hours.

"We need a quiet place to pray," he explained to motel proprietor Susan Potts.

That request for a room at the Restwell Motel, Farmington Hills led to a moral dilemma of sorts for Mrs. Potts, 52.

"I refused him a room. I said he could go to church to pray. He said they wanted a quiet room away from everything."

"I'm standing there; I don't know what to do," she recalled.

After the minister showed her several pieces of identification, Mrs. Potts finally gave the trio a room.

"Can you tell a minister he's lying?" she asked.

The meditation lasted until 3 a.m., Mrs. Potts explained.

"You get to the point where you don't believe anybody," she said.

But it's stories such as that which prove to proprietors there's no business like the motel business.

Instead of dying out about 20 years ago when the opening of M-102 shifted traffic from Grand River, the Restwell and Paul Revere motels continued to draw a few weary motorists.

BOTH MOTELS FLANK Grand River and are near the edge of the freeway that for a while threatened to destroy them.

"Things were lean for awhile on Grand River," said Ann Skotcher, owner of the Revere and a 15-year veteran of the business.

"But gradually people found out they had to get off the freeway for food and lodging," she said.

For a few years, the motels along Grand River struggled to survive the dip in business. Proprietors did their own cleaning and patched sheets to make them last longer.

Now, the survivors have built up

(Continued on page 4A)

Agendas are posted

FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL
31555 Eleven Mile
7:30 p.m., Monday, July 31

New Business

- Consideration of prohibiting overnight parking in Lincolnshire Estate.

- Appointments to boards and commissions.

- Consideration of reducing sewage disposal rates.

- Consideration of resolution of intent of the city to issue industrial bonds for GSE Inc., 23640 Research Drive.

FARMINGTON BOARD
OF EDUCATION
32500 Shawwassee
8 p.m., Tuesday, August 1

- Recommendation to begin an early childhood center in Fairview Elementary School building.

- Purchase of eight school buses.

- Appointment of consulting architect.

- Consideration of membership in the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

- Presentation of a gift for the special education program from the Knights of Columbus.

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DUNK FEVER

Every year persons flock to the Farmington Founders Festival to enjoy the festivities. Of special interest is the dunk tank where participants get to take out their aggressions on some unknown victim. To see what it's like to sit on the dunk hot seat, turn to Page 4A for an interview with Nita Piltz, this year's victim.