

Farmington Observer

Volume 91 Number 51

Thursday, April 10, 1980

Farmington, Michigan

70 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

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Employees turn sour on wage negotiations

By STEVE BARNABY

Farmington editor

One employee refers to it as a "sneaky ordeal."

Another just shakes her head and wonders when it's going to end.

"Nobody seems to want to cooperate. We just can't go on this way," the disgruntled employee says, going back to her paperwork.

That's the general feeling among Farmington Hills city employees who have been waiting for a contract settlement since July of last year.

The unsettled contract involves the 56-member Local 1456 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Members include clerks, switchboard operators, police dispatchers, teleprocessors, account clerks, senior record clerks and zoning and building inspectors.

Disagreement on a timetable to implement a state recommended pay scale for the employees is the stumbling block, according to both management and union representatives.

The study was made last year by the Michigan Department of Civil Service upon the request of City Manager Larry Savage.

"The study showed we were inadequately paid in comparison to surrounding cities," says Mike Hawley, chief steward for the local.

"NOW WE'RE trying to settle on retroactive pay," he said.

The administration's stand, according to Savage, is to try to bring in the recommended pay increases over an extended period. The union would like the raises put into effect sooner.

"We've had problems integrating the study into the negotiations," says Sav-

age, who admits that it is 80 to 90 percent correct in its conclusions.

The two sides still are negotiating with the aid of a state mediator who was brought into the process last December.

The Civil Service study recommended that all employees be brought up to the suggested scale by Jan. 1, 1980. Employees whose rate of pay is above the scale should be held up until other employees catch up, according to the study.

Salary comparisons were made between Farmington Hills employees and those from Birmingham, Ferndale, Livonia, Madison Heights, Royal Oak, Southfield, Sterling Heights, Troy, Bloomfield Township, West Bloomfield and Oakland County.

Also used were employee salaries from the state of Michigan, Blue Cross-Blue Shield, Consumers Power, Farm-

ington School District, General Motors, Jervis Webb and the National Bank of Detroit.

SWITCHBOARD operators are one example of the pay differential involved.

Presently a Farmington Hills operator is paid between \$8,350 and \$9,399. The study recommends this scale be raised to from \$11,553 to \$13,623.

In comparison, a switchboard operator in Birmingham is paid from \$11,482 to \$13,541; Livonia, \$12,168 to \$14,248; and Southfield, \$9,848 to \$10,219.

Lowest paid on the municipal scale were switchboard operators from West Bloomfield, \$9,107 to \$10,452, still higher than Farmington Hills operators.

A Farmington Hills teleprocessor is presently paid between \$9,121 and \$10,322. The study recommends this be

increased to a scale of from \$11,553 to \$13,623.

A Birmingham teleprocessor is paid from \$11,960 to \$14,123. The lowest paid municipal teleprocessor was paid from \$8,108 to \$11,958 in Troy.

Southfield teleprocessors are paid from \$10,219 to \$12,278.

Farmington Hills clerk-typists are paid from \$7,840 to \$10,836. The study recommends that scale be raised to from \$10,991 to \$11,907.

Clerk-typists in Birmingham are paid \$11,482 to \$14,123; Ferndale, \$12,569 to \$13,558; Livonia, \$10,608 to \$14,684; Southfield, \$9,917 to \$12,278; and West Bloomfield, \$7,449 to \$10,452, the lowest of all municipal employees in this classification.

WHEN COMPARED to private industry, Farmington Hills employees did slightly better on the comparison scale.

Private employers were designated by initials rather than by company name. Although many of the starting pays were lower, there was a wider range within the scale in private industry.

One employer started switchboard operators at \$6,258, but the top of the scale was \$19,359. Another employers pay range was from \$11,960 to \$14,414.

Teleprocessors for employer A were paid from \$7,375 to \$10,857; employer B, from \$6,258 to \$19,277 and employer C, from \$8,239 to \$11,710. Other salary ranges for this classification were unavailable from the private companies surveyed.

Clerk-typists pay was: Employer A, \$7,675 to \$12,771; Employer B, \$5,898 to \$19,277; Employer C, \$7,322 to \$11,003; Employer D, \$10,941 to \$14,414; Employer E, \$8,520 to \$11,688; Employer F, \$7,200 to \$9,400.

Seniors' service extended

An expansion of current taxi service which would allow the city's senior citizens and handicapped residents to travel anywhere within a five-city area at special rates won the approval of the Farmington City Council on Monday.

If the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) approves the plan, the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills will become part of a demonstration project that will allow eligible riders to travel anywhere in either city and also Livonia, Plymouth and Northville for rates ranging from 55 cents to \$1.45.

The proposal was initiated by Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman, who met with SEMTA representatives recently to discuss improvements in the city's taxi service to seniors and the handicapped. The present system allows anyone who is over 62 or who is handicapped to travel anywhere within the city of Farmington for 50 cents.

To participate in the new program, the city will have to keep SEMTA guidelines for rider eligibility, which means seniors will have to be over 65 to qualify. The current setup allows anyone over 62 to ride.

"We aren't sure how many of our current riders would be disqualified with the new age requirement," Deadman said.

He speculates that most riders are already over 65.

An eligible rider could travel anywhere within one or two zones for 55 cents, three zones for 85 cents, four zones for \$1.15 and five for \$1.45.

A rider traveling from Farmington to Plymouth would cross three zones and pay 85 cents. A trip from Farmington to the Gathering Place senior center in Farmington Hills would cost 55 cents.

SEMTA would fund the entire program, eliminating the city's annual \$3,000 to \$4,000 annual subsidy.

"The new system will open large new areas where seniors may travel, to doctors, hospitals, shopping and other trips," Deadman said.

"We believe the expanded travel area and financial subsidy from SEMTA would add to the viability of the program."



Gail Yurasek retouches a print at her shop in downtown Farmington. This is only one of her many artistic skills recently recognized by Farmington's artist community. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

Artist Diversity is key for award winner

By MARY GNIEWEK

The winner of the 1980 Artist in Residence award is a tough person to categorize.

Gail Nymnack Yurasek, 25, is a sculptor, a woodcutter, a painter, a photographer and an illustrator. She also does pen and ink drawings and has dabbled in glass blowing.

Her photographs are currently on display at the Farmington library. Her soft sculpture scenes dressed the windows of downtown Farmington stores at Christmas. Her murals brighten the walls of the Focal Point Studio of Photography, 3331 Grand River, where she's employed.

Nominated for the award by her employers, Jerry and Michele Jakacki, Mrs. Yurasek will receive a \$500 check at a formal reception next month.

"Jerry and I didn't know of anyone in Farmington as well-qualified as Gail," Mrs. Jakacki said. "There was no doubt in our minds. We're lucky to have her."

A five-member artist in residence committee chaired by Lawrence Freedman, assistant superintendent of Farmington Public Schools, agreed.

The awards program which also

recognizes a person for service to the arts is in its fifth year and is sponsored by the Farmington Arts Commission in cooperation with the Michigan Council for the Arts.

"WITH ALL THE talent in the Farmington Artists Club, I was surprised and honored to win," said Mrs. Yurasek, a 1972 graduate of Farmington High School.

She attributes her versatility to an insatiable interest in various art forms and her training at the Kendall School of Design in Grand Rapids, where she earned a degree in commercial illustration.

"At Kendall I learned to be proficient in a variety of medias," she said. "There are many areas an illustrator should be able to work in. That's where I got the technical training."

She has illustrated brochures for local businesses and draws weekly illustrations for the Our Lady of Sorrows church bulletin.

"I never thought I'd go into art because I never thought I was talented enough," she says.

Her first inclination was to pursue a career in carpentry or architecture.

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Multiple dwellings take lead

Hills housing development thrives

The construction rate that made Farmington Hills one of the state's rapid growth areas in 1979 continues to put up a brave front in the face of rising mortgage costs.

Although the building boom of two years ago has tapered, construction remains steady, according to Laurence Leeds, Farmington Hills' planning department spokesman.

In 1979, the city issued housing permits for 730 single-family homes and 918 multiple-dwelling units, according to Leeds.

From January to March 1980, the city issued 67 housing permits for sin-

gle-family homes. Together these projects carry an estimated worth of slightly more than \$4 million, according to Farmington Hills building department figures.

Actual construction on the properties continued as builders went past the stage of acquiring a housing permit. As of October 1979, single-family homes were completed or under construction on 2,935 lots in 25 subdivisions, according to Leeds' figures.

At the same time, 2,083 lots in 15 subdivisions were either platted for single-family homes or had utility lines installed prior to construction.

OF THESE projects, three subdivisions didn't make it off the drawing boards in 1979. Action wasn't taken on 108 lots in Sinacola Woods or Barbizon

in the area of 10 and 11 Mile, Orchard Lake Road and Middlebelt.

A third subdivision, Applebrook, wasn't divided into lots although it had once appeared as if there would be some attempt at construction in the subdivision, according to Leeds.

Three more subdivisions in the northwest section of the city have been divided into lots but have yet to see construction.

But housing construction in the city is moving into the northwestern section of town, which until recently was sparsely developed.

Of 25 subdivisions that were divided into lots between 1978-79, 11 are in the northwest section. Construction has not started on three of those, but the re-

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Workmen continue construction on Newport Creek condominiums on Eight Mile in Farmington Hills. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

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Deadman endorses millage cutback

Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman is recommending a 0.7 mill reduction in the city's millage rate because of the rise in state equalized valuation of property this year.

The Farmington City Council was presented with copies of the 1980-1981 proposed city budget Monday. The council has until the third Monday of May to review and adopt the budget.

The recommendation would bring

the tax levy down from 11.9865 to 11.216 mills.

"This recommendation is tentative and may have to be altered depending on the cutbacks that may occur in state and federal programs," Deadman said.

The council will study the budget tonight at 7 p.m. at city hall. Study sessions are also scheduled April 17 and 24 at 7 p.m. Residents may attend.

Council plans to adopt the budget on May 19.