

Retirement plan called giveaway

By TOM LONERGAN

Oakland County commissioners have changed the county employees' retirement system amid charges that it's a "giveaway" that will encourage employees to retire early.

The county board voted 15-5 to allow employees who have 25 years' experience and who retire before age 55 to collect their pensions at age 55. Previously, they had to wait until age 60.

Commissioners also changed the system to allow employees who work until age 70, the federally mandated retirement age, to accrue pension benefits between age 65 and 70. Under the old rule, employees 65 and older received no more pension benefits even if they continued working until 70.

THE CHANGES will immediately affect only 20 of the county's 3,500 employees.

"It could be significant over the years," said a county official who specializes in retirement benefits.

The minimal impact of the changes didn't stop commissioners from debating the issue for nearly a half-hour at Thursday's board meeting.

Board vice-chairperson Lillian Moffitt, R-Birmingham, said the change allowing early retirees to collect their pension at age 55 would cost the county \$152,500. "We're using very poor judgment to give away money that should be a negotiated item," she said.

But supporters said the two changes combined would save the county an estimated \$75,000, though only if all eligible choose the new options.

Commissioner Ralph Moxley, R-Birmingham, said the changes could lead to a person who was first employed by the county at age 18 to retire at age 43 and work elsewhere for 27 years "before being forced to retire."

"What we're doing really . . . is encouraging the employee to leave the county right at the peak of his career," Moxley said.

BUT OTHER commissioners and county officials doubted the changes would lead to early retirements because of economic conditions.

"I don't think this is going to create an exodus (of employees with 25 years' experience leaving at age 55)," said Robert Allen, the county's chief attorney, "because I don't think people can afford it the way things are going."

Besides Moffitt and Moxley, area commissioners opposing the changes included Joseph Montante, R-West Bloomfield, and Dennis Murphy, R-Novi.

Commissioners G. William Caddell, R-Walled Lake, Robert W. Page, R-Birmingham, and Southfield Democrats Alexander Perinoff and Lawrence Pernick supported the changes.

WSU budget up \$8.3 million

The Wayne State University Board of Governors recently adopted a \$144.8 million operating budget for 1980-81.

Effective Oct. 1, the spending plan is \$8.3 million more than the current budget. The increase was partially due to cutbacks, enforced savings, and a hiring freeze last April, said WSU vice president Charles F. Sturtz.

The budget was adopted without a final figure of state aid, which represents 70 percent of the university's revenue, Sturtz said.

State aid estimates range from \$95 to \$100 million. The budget estimate was \$98.6 million.

Other major revenue comes from student tuition and fees, \$39.3 million, and \$6.9 million from other sources.

Major spending is for academic programs, \$77.9 million; academic support, \$27.2 million; administration, \$27.7 million; external affairs, \$1.7 million and \$9.2 million for reserves which includes \$8.2 million for employee salaries.

Road pacts let in Troy, Avon, Bloomfield

Road construction projects in Troy, Bloomfield Township and Avon Township were recently approved by the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners.

In Troy and Bloomfield Township, a contract for widening and resurfacing the intersection of Long Lake and Adams roads was awarded to the low bidder, Stolaruk Corp. of Southfield for \$96,213. There will be a three-lane intersection with protected left turn lanes. The project is funded by the road commission.

In Avon Township, a contract for paving of approaches to primary roads at seven locations was let to the low bidder, A&A Asphalt of Pontiac for \$54,937. Funding will be shared equally by the township and road commission.

Also in Bloomfield Township, paving of just over a half-mile of streets in Charing Cross Hamlet was let to the low bidder, Stolaruk, for \$35,202. Funding will be shared 10 percent by the road commission, 10 percent by the township and 80 percent by property owners, who petitioned for the project.

Contractors were given the option of starting construction now or waiting until next spring.

Awarding of three other projects in Oxford, Lyon and Waterford townships brought the road commission's cost of construction bids in 1980 to \$9.2 million.

Of that, \$5.2 million is for widening Orchard Lake Road to five lanes for about three miles from north of 12 Mile Road to Maple.

Coast Guard Academy accepting applications

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy is now accepting applications from men and women for appointment to the class of 1985.

Gov. William Milliken said high school seniors interested in attending the Coast Guard Academy must submit their applications for participation in the nationwide competition to the Director of Admissions, United States Coast Guard Academy, before Dec. 15.

Candidates must arrange to take either the College Board Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) by Dec. 6, or the American College Testing Assessment (ACT) test by Dec. 13.

Appointments to the academy are based on the candidate's high school rank, performance on either the SAT or ACT, and leadership potential as demonstrated by participation in high school extracurricular activities, community affairs or part-time employment. No congressional appointments or geographical quotas are involved.

Most successful candidates rank in the top quarter of their high school class and demonstrate proficiency in both the mathematical and applied science fields. They must be unmarried at the time of appointment, have no legal obligation resulting from a previous marriage, must have reached age 17 (but not 22) by July 1, 1981, and be assured of high school graduation by June 30, 1981.

Applications and additional information may be obtained by writing to the Director of Admissions, United States Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn. 06320.

Milliken released details of the admissions procedure at the request of the academy.

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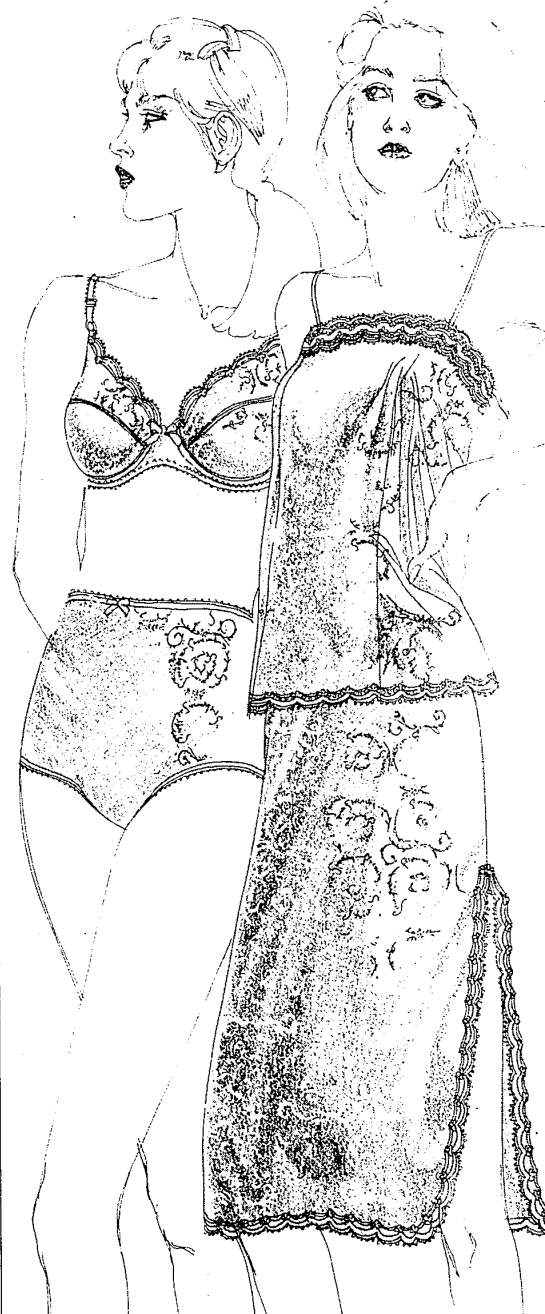
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