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Twenty-five cents

Hills firefighters reach 1-year pact — 3% raises

By Diane Hofessa
staff writer

Following three months of negotiations, Firefighters Local 2659 and the city of Farmington Hills recently reached a labor contract agreement that left firefighters less than satisfied.

"In dollars and cents I guess you could say we lost," said an unidentified union member, "but we gained in non-monetary ways." Due to previous reprimands for comments made to the press, firefighters requested their names be withheld.

The one-year contract, extending from July 1, 1982 to June 30, 1983, includes:

- A three percent pay raise for firefighters.
- Two new lieutenant positions for the fire department.
- An extended salary bonus schedule for firefighters based on the number of years with the department.
- Reduced "general alarm" standby pay for weather alerts from time and a half to straight time.
- Increased Blue Cross co-pay rates from \$2 to \$3.
- Doubled health insurance deductible rates.

Negotiations began May 10. Hills

City Council approved the new contract Aug. 16.

"I don't feel there were any big negotiation problems, just differences of opinion," said Assistant City Manager William Costick.

NEGOTIATION stumbling blocks, according to the union member, were not monetary.

"The talks went on about where firefighters can hope to go in the future. We talked about career ladders and how the city can use us in other positions."

"The union's position is that we got an equitable contract for this year," said an union officer, who also wished to remain anonymous. "The three percent pay raise isn't much compared to the rate of inflation. But I can see where the city didn't want the citizens to think they were giving away the store."

Farmington Hills fire chief Lawrence Karos was unavailable for comment.

Starting pay for Farmington Hills firefighters under the new contract is \$16,202, compared to \$15,730 under the old contract. Top pay under the new contract is \$24,298, compared to last year's \$23,550.

The new lieutenant positions were what a union member described as non-monetary gains. "The positions provide firefighters with a career ladder to follow. They represent a chance for advancement and room to grow," he said.

Both lieutenants, according to Costick, will work closely with Karos. They will handle truck, radio and equipment maintenance and dispatching and communications between the city's four fire stations.

One lieutenant will be involved with fire prevention while the other will oversee general department operations.

Base salary for the new lieutenants will be \$27,466.

THE SALARY bonus schedule under the new contract is now the same as that for The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

With this schedule, employees receive one percent of their salary as a bonus after five years with the department.

The salary bonus increases with time. After 15 years, employees receive six percent bonus — a addition new to this year's contract.

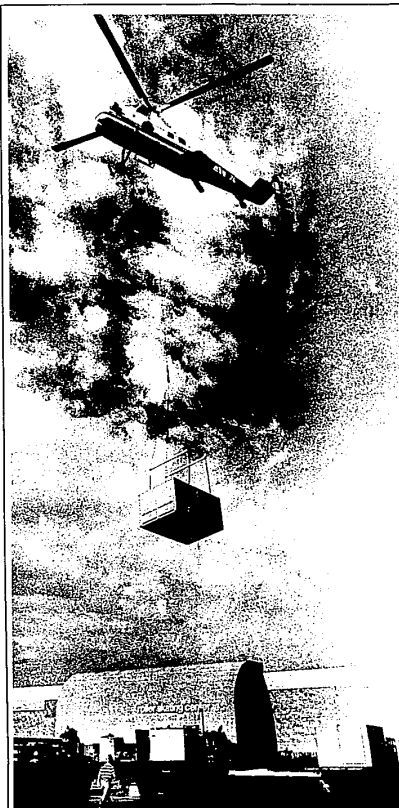
The union representatives classified some items in the new contract as small losses.

The union officer dismissed the reduced general alarm standby pay for weather emergencies as "no big deal," explaining that emergencies of that type occur "maybe twice a year." Last year the October flood and the Bedford Apartments fire were the only occasions for general alarm.

Also regarded as a small loss was the Blue Cross co-pay change in the contract. Firefighters now pay the first \$2, rather than the first \$2 on prescriptions.

NOT QUITE SO small, however, was the increase in health insurance deductibles. Under the new contract, single firefighters pay the first \$100. Last year they paid the first \$50. Married firefighters pay the first \$200 this year but paid the first \$100 last year. "Top doubled deductibles will save the city a few bucks," said the union member.

"It's not a good contract; it's not a bad contract. It's fair in comparison to what other area firefighters got."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Whirly gig

Five heating and cooling units were lowered into place on top of Bonaventure Skating Rink in Farmington Hills Tuesday by helicopter pilot Jim Briggman. The 2-year-old electric units these replaced were unreliable, says rink owner Louis Armbruster, and cost him \$34,000 in repair bills — the subject of a lawsuit. For more on the big lift, turn to Page 8A.

Smaller investors move into the market

By Diane Hofessa
staff writer

While professional investors are leading the stock market rally on Wall Street, individual investors are starting to jump in, say local stock brokers.

"The big guys jump in at a hint that the market is going up. The little guys don't jump in until after it has gone up," says Birmingham stock broker John Jushkewich of Ashton and Company.

And the market has gone up. The New York Stock Exchange recorded record volume last week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average reached 891.17 on Monday, up 21.88 points that day.

Spurred by the lowered interest rates, professional stock players and their "little guy" counterparts are making their market moves. Sixty days ago the prime rate was 16.5 percent. Today it is 13.5 percent. Sixty days ago \$100,000 certificates of deposit would have brought 14.5 percent interest. Today they bring 8.5 percent interest.

"We are extremely busy as compared with early this summer. A lot of people are getting their money out of money market funds and into stocks and bonds," says stock broker Jack Ducas of Rodecker and Company Investment Brokers in Southfield. The company handles stocks sold to individuals.

Also participating in the recently increased stock volume is stock broker Alan Piedmont of Smith, Rague and Company, in Farmington Hills. "People are now realizing that there are better (stock) market conditions and reduced interest rates."

"They are taking money out of money market funds and buying common stocks and bonds," Piedmont said. Jushkewich explains that interest rates and incomes are down and individuals are trying to improve their financial status. This has led "to activity in bonds."

"A Wall Street in miniature" is how Ducas describes stock activity in his 12-broker office. "People aren't running around the floor like on Wall

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MetroVision to install cable

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

MetroVision cable television company is sending out contractors late this week or early next week to begin wiring Farmington Hills neighborhoods for cable television, according to a company spokesman.

The first neighborhood targeted for construction is in the vicinity of 12 Mile Road and Farmington Road, says Tom Bjorklund, general manager of MetroVision of Oakland County. Work by one of six crews will probably begin in Farmington within a week, Bjorklund says.

In areas served by overhead utility poles, MetroVision cable will be strung up on existing poles alongside Detroit Edison and Michigan Bell lines. Contractors working for Aech Services of Knoxville, Tenn., are handling serial construction work for the cable company, Bjorklund says. Knight Construction of Troy is the contractor for underground cable installation.

IN AREAS served by underground utility services, the cable will be buried in existing utility easements alongside Bell and Edison lines. Like the two public utilities, metal boxes called pedestals, will be built along the ground in spots to hold electronic equipment used by the cable company.

Wherever there is above-ground installation, cable contractors first attach anchors and guy wires on certain poles to comply with safety regulations before installing a strand wire and finally the actual cable.

With underground installation, the cable company "will be responsible for

restoring the grounds after construction is completed in an area," notes Thomas Biasell, director of public services in Farmington Hills.

During the preliminary stages of cable construction there will be a need for trucks to enter homes or businesses.

To guard against scams by thieves posing as cable representatives, officials urge residents ask cable workers to produce a picture ID card issued by the company and to call the cable office if there are any questions.

Until local construction warehouse opens next month on Haggerty Road, south of 10 Mile Road, residents should call MetroVision's Redford office at 538-1513; the Farmington warehouse's number will be 471-3737 when it opens.

THE STUDIO and offices of MetroVision for the tri-city franchise of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi will be built in Farmington Hills on Halsted Road, south of 12 Mile Road. Plans call for a 7,500-square-foot building with two satellite dish antennas and an 80-foot tower antenna.

MetroVision received unanimous approval Monday from Farmington Hills City Council on an ordinance written expressly for the company permitting construction of an antenna tower as high as 100 feet in an IRO (industrial, research and office) zone as well as a light industrial zone.

Ham radio operators are restricted to antennas no higher than 14 feet without a waiver from the zoning board of appeals. Antennas attached to a house roof cannot exceed 25 feet above ground, according to Hal Rowe, city zoning supervisor.

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

A public eyesore will become a community asset if all goes according to plan concerning the impending sale of the long-vacant Bond Elementary School.

The old school is located on 13 Mile Road near Orchard Lake Road.

A \$340,000 purchase offer made by developer Ronald L. Hughes of West Bloomfield was accepted by the Farmington Board of Education on Aug. 5, 1980. Since then, little progress has been made on plans to convert the 28,000-square-foot building to office space as promised.

Neighbors recently complained to the school district (which still owns the property) about increasing vandalism by persons who are breaking windows and stealing everything of value inside the old school. The lack of renovation and the rundown appearance of the school has caused many homeowners to conclude that office conversion plans had been dropped by the developer.

However, the school district is expected to turn ownership over to Hughes on Sept. 7 if the state legislature, in the interim, passes a bill to remove a "reverter clause" on various lots on the eight-acre parcel. The legal technicalities are holding up title transfer.

William Prisk, assistant superintendent for finance and services in the school district, explained that before the sale can be made, the state legislature must relinquish its hold on various lots on the site.

When the school was built back in the 1920s, Prisk says, some parts of the property belonged to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The title states the land will be returned to state control if the property is sold for a purpose other than public education.

—The Farmington Observer staff

square-foot refurbished building, Hughes adds.



South elevation

Developer's plans for the transformation of Bond School into an office center are shown in an artist's drawing. The view is from 13 Mile Road.

"THE STATE really doesn't want the property," Prisk says.

Slate Rep. Wilbur "Sandy" Brotherton, R-Farmington, will introduce a bill to remove the obstacle when the Legislature returns to session following Labor Day.

Developer Hughes says this latest claim on the title is only one of several unexpected delays in his plans to convert the school to an office complex. Another delay was caused by an heir of the original property owner, Isaac Bond, who unsuccessfully sought to keep the property in control of the school district for educational use.

"The school was built and added onto over a series of years," Hughes says. "The original structure was built in the '20s with additions built in the '50s and '60s. All of the existing structure will be retained, although the exterior walls won't be visible. When we're through you'll never know a school was ever on the site."

Hughes says an atrium, or greenhouse, will be built on the west side of the building and will serve as the building's main entrance.

Rental space of about 38,000 feet will be contained within the 44,000-

AN OPENING in fall or winter of 1983 is planned, he said. Architectural

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"GRAND CENTRAL STATION"

"We received calls all day Monday and Tuesday—we got so many calls—it was like Grand Central Station!" M. Evans was pleased with the response of her "House to Rent" classified ad in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Remember...

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To our readers:

In an effort to better serve you, the Farmington Observer will inaugurate three new, continuing features. All three make their debut in today's edition.

The "Farmington Flashback" column, presented each Thursday, will recount news that 25, 50 and 75 years ago made headlines in Farmington. We hope you'll enjoy glimpsing into the pages of the past. For today's flashback, please turn to Page 2A.

Our second addition, "Police Pulse," presents a monthly tally of crime in Farmington and Farmington Hills. It's intended to give you at a glance an overall view of the preceding month's police log. The Observer will continue its in-depth coverage of

the most serious crimes. July's "Police Pulse" can be found on Page 6A.

Third, we're initiating "Scientific Spectrum," a page devoted to health and science.

Each month, we'll bring you profiles on professionals, explore medical and scientific frontiers, and explain everyday occurrences you may have always wondered about, but never fully understood.

See Page 3A for today's "Scientific Spectrum" featuring an interview with an African physician who recently moved to Farmington Hills.

Your comments and suggestions, as always, are welcome.

—The Farmington Observer staff