

Teachers laid off on heels of contract settlement

By Patrick N. Bowling
Novi-Walled Lake News

Formal approval of the 1983-84 Walled Lake teacher contract last week was accompanied by the layoff of nearly 80 teachers, effective Monday, Oct. 21.

The board also announced its intention for a Dec. 6 election to raise the tax rate.

Superintendent Don Sheldon said the layoffs would boost the average class size in the district to about 30 students. However, there will be some elementary classes with as many as 36 students and some secondary classes with more than 40 students, he said.

If the district accepts a tax-rate increase this winter, Sheldon said the new revenues would be used to call back laid off teachers "as soon as possible."

"My anticipation is that the millage would be sufficient to cover all cuts

made tonight," he told an audience of about 600 at the last week's meeting. The amount of new tax dollars to be requested of district residents will be determined at a special board meeting at 8 tonight.

THE LAYOFF LIST of 35 elementary and 43 secondary teachers was approved 6-0 by the school board. Trustee Bonnie Venise was absent because of a family emergency.

Walled Lake Education Association (WLEA) President Heidi Wilkins said that although the teachers knew the number of layoffs would be high, many hoped the board would include program cuts to minimize the staff reduction.

"I, personally, was devastated," she commented.

The layoffs will eliminate the elementary literature programs in art, music and physical education, the audio

visual program at the high school and the elementary reading support program.

Also included on the layoff list were: varsity football coach Charles App, varsity golf coach Job Fundulkin, girls' softball coach Tom Societal, reserve basketball coach Ken Smith and varsity basketball coach Ken Connor, all from Western High School.

Central High School teachers on the layoff list include varsity basketball coach Steve Emert, varsity volleyball coach Michael Lindstrom, varsity cross country coach David Darnton, pompano sponsor Judy Kowalczyk, cheerleader sponsor Nancy Burt and assistant wrestling coach Greg Wilkayew, as well as Clifford Smart Junior High School cross country coach Gary Dix.

A SPOKESPERSON from the district athletic department said these coaches and sponsors have the option of continuing their extracurricular du-

ties, if it is feasible for them. The duties of those who cannot continue coaching will be picked up by remaining staff or outside individuals, wherever possible. If a replacement coach cannot be secured, the sport would have to be dropped.

Trustee Patricia Jackson said the board considered cutting all extracurricular activities, but this would involve the layoff of only one less teacher than the plan adopted by the board. The board did not want to be involved in the partial elimination of extracurriculars, which would be perceived as favoring one sport or age group over the others, she added. Therefore, layoffs primarily were figured according to seniority.

The seniority of teachers included on the layoff list ranged from one to 11 years experience, Sheldon said.

THE CONTRACT which made layoffs necessary according to the

board, was ratified by the 474-member WLEA by a 318-98 secret ballot vote. The agreement calls for a wage freeze this year with no increments, a wage freeze next year with increments, and an 8-percent salary increase in 1985-86.

Wilkins said WLEA members expressed a general concern about the school board following through on a long-range plan to get the district back on its feet financially.

"It was not an easy decision," she said, noting that there was discussion among the members "right up to the last moment. The ratification" strongly reflects the desire of the union for the board to make decisions about pro-

gram cuts so the entire effect (of the financial crisis) will not be felt by teachers' layoffs," she said.

THERE ALSO WAS discussion among board members up to the last moment of notification. It was reflected in the abstention of one board member in the 8-0 vote to ratify the teacher agreement.

Giving no other reason but that he was acting on the advice of his attorney, Trustee Merlin Reeds bowed out of the ratification vote, while trustees Jackman, Mario Tozzi, Robert Cooper, Kenneth Tucker, and Cynthia Campion carried the decision.

Others encouraged to retire early

Three Walled Lake teachers will take the early retirement pay provided in the 1983-86 teacher contract, which was finalized last week.

Walled Lake Education Association negotiator Karen Flar said any of the eligible teachers who wish to accept the offer will have to respond within the 10-day period set by the school board Oct. 17.

The contract offers a \$15,000 cash payment to any teacher 55 years of age or older with at least 10 years' experience in the district. The offer is available this year only, and only to teachers willing to retire within the allotted 10 days.

Former teacher contracts provided an early retirement incentive of \$5,000 for a teacher retiring at age 58; \$4,000

for retirement at age 57; \$3,000 for retirement at age 56; \$2,000 for retirement at age 55, and \$1,000 for retirement at age 60.

Savings from two fewer teacher-working days this school year will provide the funds for the \$15,000 retirement payment, Flar explained.

Although teachers were out of the classroom for seven school days because of a strike, all but two teaching days will be made up in June.

obituaries

ROBERT P. SWAN

Mr. Swan, 32, of Torrance, Calif., formerly of Farmington, died Oct. 4.

Mr. Swan was a creative writer in advertising.

Survivors include his wife, Vega; parents, Dr. and Mrs. George Swan; brothers, Phillip and Paul.

Services were Oct. 8 at the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills, and Nardin Park Methodist Church, with the Rev. William A. Ritter officiating. Burial was in Acacia Park Cemetery, Birmingham.

HELENE B. RAMOCKI

Mrs. Ramocki, 65, of Orchard Lake died Oct. 5 in Beaumont Hospital. Born in Holland, Mrs. Ramocki was a sales consultant for a real estate firm.

Survivors include her husband, Fred; a daughter, Maria and a son, John; one sister and one brother.

Services were Oct. 6 at the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills, Mass. was at Prince of Peace Catholic Church, Bloomfield Hills, with the Rev. Edmund Schwager officiating. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

EDWARD H. BENJAMIN

Mr. Benjamin, 61, of West Bloomfield died Oct. 6 in Holy Cross Hospital, Detroit.

Born in New York, Mr. Benjamin was self-employed.

Survivors include his sons, Henry and Jay; daughters, Helene Lubin and Elise; two grandchildren.

Services were Oct. 9 at the Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Tim Thomas officiating. Burial was in Bethel Memorial Park Cemetery, Livonia.

MARIE F. KNIGHT

Mrs. Knight, 68, of Roscommon, Mich. died Oct. 9 in Mercy Hospital, Grayling.

Born in Canada, Mrs. Knight worked for Sanders.

Survivors include her husband, Ludwig; daughter, Leanne Goldberg and Julie Rosati; one brother and two sisters; four grandchildren.

Services were Oct. 12 at the Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Edward Belczak officiating. Burial was in Roseland Park Cemetery, Berkley.

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