

County pares judges' pay hikes

By Jim Richard
Staff Writer

Probate and district judges will find this Jan. 1 pay hikes smaller than expected because the Oakland County Board of Commissioners whittled them down.

"The pattern of increases for county employees was 7 percent, roughly," said Commissioner Robert Page, Farmington. "With the July 1 hike the judges received, it's 10.7 percent for the year. That's unconscionable."

The board gave 18-8 approval to Page's amendment to cut \$2,045 from the \$2,939 increase district judges had seen scheduled for in County Executive Daniel T. Murphy's budget. District judges instead will receive a shade more than \$63,000.

The board also gave 16-10 approval to Page's amendment to cut \$916 from the \$1,925 which had been scheduled for probate court judges. Probate judges will receive a total of \$54,000-plus annually.

ADAMANTLY opposing the cuts was Commissioner Alex Perinoff, D-Southfield, a lawyer in private life.

"It's amazing to me how he (Page) picks out one particular class of people to pick on. Judges are inundated with work. Everybody is using somebody's equal rights, harassment, product liability, malpractice."

"The \$65,000 for district judges is

paltry. I tell you they earn everything they get. . . It's cheap — a cheap shot to pick on this group," the angry Perinoff said.

Fellow Democrat James Doyon of Madison Heights disagreed. "The judges are doing a good job, but we have 3,000 county employees doing good jobs. They see this (judges' raises) and say, 'I'm a little peon; I'm getting peed on again.'"

Doyon and caucus leader Larry Perinick, D-Southfield, split with Perinoff by supporting the reduction for district judges, but rejoined Perinoff to oppose the cut for probate judges.

Supporting both reductions were Republicans G. William Caddell of Walled Lake, Marilyn Gosling of Bloomfield Hills, George B. Jackson of Birmingham, Susan Kuhn of Clawson, Thomas Law of West Bloomfield, John McDonald of Farmington, Lillian Moffitt of Bloomfield Township, Ralph Nelson of Rochester, Page and Roy Rewold of Rochester.

Commissioner John E. Olsen, R-Huntington Woods, opposed both cuts.

DEMOCRATS vainly attempted to amend the \$129 million budget to cut positions from Republican Executive Murphy's staff but were shot down every time on 16-8 party line votes.

Democrats called the series of amendments their "five year plan" because, in the words of one: "The first

year, only Democrats support it. The second year, a few thinking Republicans. . . The fifth year, the executive passes it off as his idea."

Caddell, the finance committee chairman, was more successful in offering his amendments. Among them:

- Adding \$20,328 in salary and contingencies for the cultural affairs coordinator. Perinoff opposed it. "This job started as a volunteer position. Later there was a \$10,000 grant from the

state. Now, of course, we have no grant. As I predicted, it's growing like a maggot. . . I don't see Bob Page flyspecking this one." It passed 19-7.

- Adding \$7,500 for a volunteer recognition program by a 22-4 vote. "A good thought. A noble thought," said Perinoff. "I move to transfer it from the county executive's budget to the Board of Commissioners' budget." His amendment to the amendment passed with 24 yes votes and one "I don't care."

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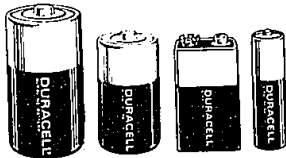
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