

Jail contract awarded despite complaint

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

Despite charges of discrimination in Oakland County's contract system, the jail roof project will not be put through the bidding process again.

But there are expected to be some changes in the way Oakland County takes bids on building projects.

"The whole issue this brought to the fore was the basic opportunity to bid," said Commissioner Hubert Price, D-Pontiac, who believes the roof controversy "heightened sensitivity about opportunities to minorities and small business."

"Our bid procedure is under close scrutiny and we expect to come up with modifications."

COMMISSIONERS THURSDAY voted to award a contract for \$482,366 for a roofing job to the low bidder, Michigan Roofing and Sheet Metal. The Detroit firm happens to be a women's business enterprise.

The board of commissioners' action

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Oakland County executive

came after Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy vetoed their decision two weeks ago to rebid the project because a Pontiac builder was unable to compete for it.

The black-owned firm, Price Brothers Roofing Co., complained that a "blatantly discriminatory method" was used in making the award. Price Brothers charged some competing contractors were personally telephoned to invite their bids.

At last week's meeting, the president of an 82-member group of minority entrepreneurs said Price Brothers was denied equal opportunity to bid on the jail contract.

"I submit that the order of the day is to rectify this injustice and to take appropriate steps to ensure that this does not again occur," said Michael J. Morton, president of the Oakland County Business Consortium in Southfield.

IN HIS VETO message, Murphy disagreed. "We conformed to fair practices of advertising, and it would be grossly unfair and grossly in error if we reject the low bid of the lawful bidder," he said.

As a result of the discrimination charges, commissioners became aware that the county has two lists of possible bidders for construction projects.

Price Brothers, which has done repairs on the jail roof, is on the list in the Management and Budget Department. It is not on the Central Services list, which was the one used for the complete jail roof.

Price said he hopes the changes in the bidding process will prevent similar problems.

"I'm certainly going to push for one list in the future," the Pontiac Democrat said firmly.

IN OTHER ACTION the board of commissioners:

• Commended R. Eric Reickel for his achievements during 12 years as manager of Oakland County Parks. The

West Bloomfield resident is the new head of Wayne County's park system.

• Appointed Philip W. Donders, manager of the county's planning division, to the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) board. He will replace retiring John Peterson of Ann Arbor.

• Named Commissioner Roy Rewold, R-Oakland Township, to represent Oakland with the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC).

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OU in red, but holds line on tuition

The Oakland University Board of Trustees approved a general fund operating budget with \$41.3 million in revenues and \$41.2 million in expenditures for fiscal 1984-85. It includes a \$1.9 million deficit.

The budget honors Gov. James J. Blanchard's desire to hold the line on tuition. But trustees did approve an increase in student fees of \$20 per semester, resulting in an estimated total of \$665,000.

OU officials say the state appropriation increase, while generous, is based on 58.7 percent of the university's budget base. Tuition, the other large portion of that base, remains the same.

The state appropriation for OU will be \$24.2 million during OU's fiscal year (July through June) for an increase of 11.04 percent. OU will receive \$24.9 million during

the state's fiscal year (October through September).

THE DEFICIT will be handled in two ways, OU officials said:

• A \$1.4 million balance from 1983-84 will be applied to the deficit.

• The remaining \$24,000 will be carried forward on the budget until the state legislature approves a supplemental appropriation. This appropriation would refund the nearly \$1.5 million owed to the university through promised restoration of executive orders 1982-13 and 1985-5.

These executive orders were issued by then-Gov. William Milliken and withheld from OU money that had already been appropriated to operate the university.

OU officials said repayment of the \$1.5

million lost through executive orders will allow the university to balance its budget. Remaining funds will go to one-time priority items such as instructional equipment, library acquisitions, deferred maintenance equipment and computer equipment.

THE \$20 INCREASE in semester fees brings resident undergraduate yearly tuition and fees to \$1,535.50 for freshmen and sophomores; to \$1,802.50 for juniors and seniors; and to \$2,118 for graduate students, all up \$40 over 1983-84.

The costs are based on 31 credits for undergraduate students and 24 credits for graduate students.

Oakland University had ranked seventh in tuition and fees among the 15 public four-year colleges and universities. With the increase the university ranks sixth.

OU officials point out that from 1974-1977 through 1983-84 OU increased its share of the state enrollment pool from 4.17 to 4.83 percent but that during the same period OU's percentage of state funding went only from 3.23 to 3.27 percent.

Out of necessity, tuition and fees have become a larger percentage of the university's revenue base. The university had a record 12,084 full- and part-time students in the fall of 1983.

General fund revenues for 1984-85 are: State appropriation, \$24.24 million; tuition, \$14.41 million; student fees \$1.2 million; indirect cost recovery \$475,000; miscellaneous revenue \$750,000.

The 1983-84 budget was \$39.7 million.

College offers keyboard classes

In response to the increased use of microcomputers in business, industry, government and education, Oakland Community College will offer a new course in keyboarding this fall.

Designed to prepare students to input data on computers and microcomputers swiftly and accurately, the class will emphasize alphanumeric keyboarding techniques and proper formatting procedures for the input of coding and layout forms, as well as business documents.

Students will work on both the typewriter and the microcomputer during

the semester. Use of the 10-key numeric keypad will also be highlighted.

Keyboarding (SEC 100) will be offered this fall at the Auburn Hills, Highland Lakes, Orchard Ridge, and Royal Oak campuses.

The 1984 fall semester will begin Aug. 30. Registration, according to an alphabetical schedule, will be held Monday-Wednesday, Aug. 27-29.

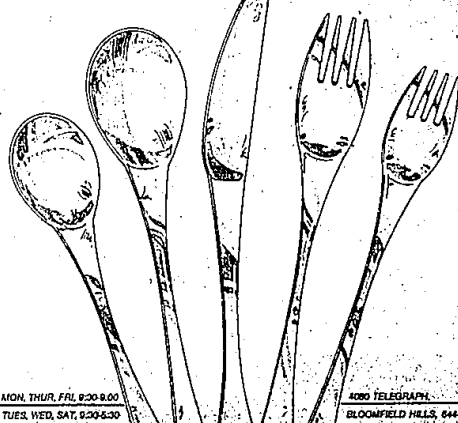
Contact an admissions counselor at the campus of your choice: Auburn Hills, 833-4267; Highland Lakes, 360-3087; Orchard Ridge, 471-7620; and Royal Oak, 967-5769.

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