

Dems win one

GOP accepts one budget idea — study car fleet

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Each year Democratic commissioners offer the same list of amendments to the Oakland County budget. Each year the annoyed Republican majority turns them down and mutters that the Democrats are grandstanding for the press.

But last week a Democratic amendment — to study use of county cars and car phones — was actually adopted.

"I haven't been so excited since V-E Day," said Dennis Aaron, D-Oak Park, a nine-term veteran of the board. V-E stands for victory in Europe, the day 43 years ago when Germany surrendered to end World War II.

The board gave 11-10 approval to Aaron's proposal to set up a five-member ad hoc study committee, dropping a phrase declaring its goal was to reduce the car fleet by 25 percent.

"I have no problem with looking at it (car policy)," said finance committee chairman G. William Caddell, R-

Walled Lake, "but don't set the 25 percent goal now."

THE BUDGET for 1989 is \$280.4 million and will require the usual 4.6 mills of property tax (\$4.60 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation). Its major new feature is \$2.5 million in cigarette tax money from the state — with \$1.6 million going to the health division and \$900,000 to the Sheriff's Department.

The only monetary amendment was to increase capital funding for county airports from \$250,000 to \$400,000.

"You should reduce it 10 percent across the board, and let county executive Daniel T. Murphy figure out what they're going to cut," said John King, Bloomfield Township retiree and 15-year "public critic."

"You could cut clear across the board by 50 percent," said an irate Oxford resident during a public hearing.

The budget was adopted on a 20-2 vote, with Aaron and James Doyon, D-Madison Heights, dissenting.

AMONG THE Democratic amendments which went down were:

- Appropriate \$90,000 to set up a county clerk's branch office with the treasurer's satellite office in the Road Commission headquarters in Beverly Hills — 7 yes and 15 no.

- Doyon, attending his last meeting after 14 years on the board, said the office would allow people to get birth, death and marriage certificates without traveling to Pontiac. Replied James Lanni, R-Royal Oak, also at his last meeting: "I was a supporter of south end offices. But the proper way to handle this is with electronics. We don't need bricks and mortar."

- Delete Murphy's deputy county executive for administration and the federal-state grants coordinator — 6 for and 15 against.

- Shift 33 jobs in the executive's public safety division to the sheriff — sent to the public services committee.

- Shift dispatch and communications of the safety division, animal control division, Children's Village, Friend of the Court, Probate Court

and building attendants to the Sheriff's Department — also sent to the public services committee.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS of the spending plan:

- The village of Bingham Farms turned back its \$25,000 road improvement grant from 1988, and the Board of Commissioners put it into the 1989 general fund.

- The state Auto Prevention Theft Authority made a third-year grant of \$151,000 to the prosecutor for an anti-car theft effort. The money supports two assistant prosecutors and office expenses. It's \$53,000 more than the current year.

- The board granted 4.5 percent pay increases to non-union employees, elected countywide officials and itself. The vote was 15-6 along party lines.

- The board approved a contract with Arena Associates, operators of The Palace in Auburn Hills, to supply sheriff's deputies to assist in traffic control for the 1989 season, with the company paying for them at the rate of \$31.32 each per hour.

Weight loss program introduced to area women

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County commits to recycling goal

In a major policy decision, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners committed itself to waste reduction, recycling and composting of trash.

The vote was 19-0. There wasn't a word of comment from the board in its final meeting of 1988 that followed a decade of committee discussions.

The five-year goal will be to reduce, recycle and compost 20 percent of all solid wastes, according to the draft submitted by the planning and building committee, chaired by commissioner Anne Hobart, R-White Lake.

IN TWO financial actions, the county board:

- Applied for a state grant of \$300,000 for technical assistance in developing a resource recovery facility. That, with \$150,000 in county funds, will help pay for the planning effort.

- Authorized \$450,000 for work on siting a sanitary landfill within the county. The hired consultant is the firm of Rogers, Golden & Halpern, Inc.

The long-range strategy commits the county to "take every step possible" to recycle the 1,500 tons of trash by the year 2000.

MAJOR ELEMENTS in the \$800 million to \$1 billion plan:

- Three major waste separation-processing facilities in the central,

southeast and southwest regions of the county. Each would be capable of processing 300-500 tons per day of recyclables and compostables.

- Three smaller waste separation-transfer facilities, to receive separated trash and recyclables.

- Three regional wood and yard

waste composting facilities.

- A network of processing facilities for other special materials such as tires, concrete debris, batteries, household hazardous wastes, used motor oil, reusable household goods and reusable commercial and industrial goods.

State extends gas incentive

A special economic incentive rate for Consumers Power's natural gas industrial customers was extended to 1990 by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

The utility, which serves most Oakland and Wayne county suburbs, has 22 customers on the rate, includ-

ing paper mills, robotics, asphalt and automotive manufacturing firms.

Through the first three quarters of 1988, customers on the incentive rate saved a total of \$122,000 over Consumers Power's standard gas industrial rate.

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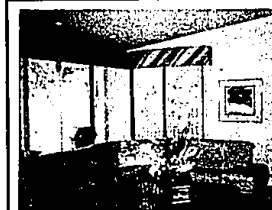
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