

Court cost fight

Oakland commissioners protest rising costs

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Court costs continue to climb, and some Oakland County commissioners continue to protest.

On split votes, the county board last week voted to add 13 positions in the county-funded 52nd District Court and a research law clerk to the Probate Court staff.

"There exists a four-month delay in scheduling traffic and civil infraction hearings and significant delays in scheduling other cases (in 52nd District Court)," said a report from the board's public services committee.

The resolution to increase court staffing passed 20-5, with Democratic commissioners from Hazel Park,

Ferndale, Oak Park and Southfield voting no.

"THERE'S STILL an inequity," said Commissioner Ruel McPherson, D-Hazel Park, pointing to the political problem.

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vocated holding up the 13 jobs in order to "use those judges as a means to talk to the cities and give up those revenues."

But Commissioner Mark McCulloch, R-Royal Oak, said that while he favors a return of the revenues, "I don't think we should hold up the clerical positions over the judges as a kind of sword of Damocles."

THE NEW positions, which will cost a total of \$315,000 over a full year, are:

- 1st division — three clerks and one magistrate. The division covers southwestern Oakland — Novi, Westland, South Lyon, Walled Lake, Milford and Highland.
- 3rd division — six clerks and one magistrate. The division covers

Auburn Hills, Rochester, Rochester Hills and northeastern townships.

• 4th division — one clerk and one magistrate. The division covers Troy and Clawson.

The cost will be covered 80 percent by ordinance fines and 20 percent by state law costs.

THERE WAS NO debate, but a split 21-2 vote, over the proposal to hire an additional research attorney for the probate judges.

Total cost of salary and benefits is \$46,250.

The cost will be partly offset by \$26,000 in savings from two juvenile court referee positions which were vacant from Jan. 1 to Feb. 23 and the deletion of a special assistant's job.

County won't fight CP move

Oakland County commissioners have rejected a southeastern county effort to fight Consumers Power Co.'s plans to move part of a field office out of Royal Oak.

The gas utility says it can save \$1 million in operating and administrative costs by moving 140 maintenance, construction and field operations workers to Pontiac and Livonia.

"It's strictly a labor-management dispute," said Commissioner Richard Skarritt, R-Milford, opposing the resolution. The board rejected it 16-9 on a vote that crossed party lines.

"IT'S AN issue of safety," said Commissioner Ruel McPherson, D-Hazel Park. "It's like a fire department in your neighborhood."

McPherson said the older southeastern part of the county needs protection through quick response time to broken gas mains and gas leaks. "The Pontiac site is 12 miles away, and the Livonia site is 22 miles," he said.

"I can't comprehend how Consumers Power can save \$1 million and not hurt service," added Com-

missioner Don Jensen, R-Birmingham, who supported the resolution. "Consumers Power has stated their response time would not increase," Skarritt replied, "because their emergency people are in the field. It's a safety issue played up in a labor-management dispute."

AREA COMMISSIONERS voting yes were Republicans Jensen and Mark Chester of Troy, and Democrats Lillian Jaffee Oake and Larry Pernick, both of Southfield.

Opposed were Republicans Don Bishop of Rochester, G. William Caddell of Walled Lake, Marilyn Goeling and Nancy McConnell of Bloomfield Hills, David Moffitt of Farmington Hills, Jack Olsen of Huntington Woods, John Pappageorge of Troy, Roy Newbold of Rochester Hills and Donn Wolf of Farmington Hills.

"Consumers Power has stated their response time would not increase," said Skarritt, "because their emergency people are in the field. It's a safety issue played up in a labor-management dispute."

Incinerator bill passes House

Over the protests of environmentalists, the state House of Representatives has passed a bill allowing communities to bury incinerator ash in solid waste landfills within a special cell called a monofill.

David Stead, executive director of the Michigan Environmental Council, said his group remains opposed to the bill, which goes to the Senate. Stead said lawmakers are ignoring public health risks.

Two municipal incinerators — in Jackson and Macomb County's Clinton Township — have closed because of a determination that ash would have to be treated like hazardous

waste and stored in hazardous waste landfills.

Hazardous waste storage is much more expensive than monofills in solid waste landfills.

THE MEASURE, House Bill 4311, was sponsored by Rep. Michael Griffin, D-Jackson, and approved 69-33.

Area lawmakers voting yes were Democrats Justine Barns of Westland, William Keith of Garden City and James Kosteva of Canton, and Republicans Lyn Bankes of Livonia, Jan Dolan of Farmington Hills, Ger-

ald Law of Plymouth and Gordon Sparks of Troy.

Opposed were Democrats John Bennett of Redford and Wilfred Webb of Hazel Park; and Republicans Mat Dunaskis of Lake Orion, David Honigman of West Bloomfield and Judith Miller of Birmingham.

STEAD SAID lawmakers made the change because of public money tied up in incinerators. The city of Detroit this fall will open a \$438 million trash burner.

"There are high lead levels in in-

cinerator ash, and lead is pretty well proven one of the nastiest things around. We're not just concerned with lead that leaches out groundwater, but total lead, which is what would happen in dust emissions."

Rep. Perry Bullard, D-Ann Arbor, urged the House to vote down the measure and consider alternatives such as recycling.

But Griffin, the sponsor, countered: "Even if you have recycling, you're still going to need incineration."

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3. Include cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, kohlrabi and cauliflower.
4. Be moderate in consumption of salt-cured, smoked, and nitrite-cured foods.
5. Cut down on total fat intake from animal sources and fats and oils.
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7. Be moderate in consumption of alcoholic beverages.

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