

State budget deal delays college funds

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Confused but relieved. That's how state legislators felt in the wake of a budget deal, 8½ months into fiscal 1991, between Gov. John Engler and their own leadership.

"It's very difficult to understand the extent of what's taking place here," said a confused Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, as the appropriations committees examined the agreement Tuesday.

Reason: The deal was contained in a horrendously complicated executive order (which the appropriations panels approved) showing only the differences between what Engler had wanted to eliminate and total spending for the year, along with a supplemental appropriations bill.

"Jake and I had very little impact," said Senate Appropriations chair Harry Gast, R-St. Joseph, speaking also for House Appropriations chair Dominic Jacobetti, D-Negaunee.

"We're making the best of a bad situation," Gast added. "If we (legislators) had put this together, it would have been unacceptable to Management and Budget (director Patil Woodworth). But their fingers are in it."

ONE LEGISLATOR after another vowed "never again" would they allow a budget battle to proceed "to the brink" of chaos.

"It's a very unfortunate process," said Faxon. "We either accept or reject."

Acting Gov. Connie Binsfeld put the only positive face on it when she presented the package to a joint meeting of the appropriations panels.

"We have not made any cuts in education, and we have not raised taxes."

ACTUALLY, THE compromise did make a temporary \$14 million cut in what the state's 29 community colleges and 15 public universities will receive.

In a once-only gimmick, the deal eliminated June and July payments to higher education. For the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, that took \$81 million from the two-year schools and \$34 million from the four-year schools.

But the leadership promised to restore that money in fiscal 1992, beginning Oct. 1.

"It will not severely impact them (colleges)," said Gary Olson, director of the Senate Fiscal Agency. "The impact will be on their cash flow situation. They'll let you know they're losing investment income. On the state's books, it's a cut. On their books, it's a delay."

Replied Sen. Lana Pollack, D-Ann Arbor: "This is not a delay, it's a cut unless we restore it next year (in the fiscal '92 budget). I don't think they're going to get the full amount."

HERE IS how other areas of the \$8 billion spending plan fared:

- Arts — an especially confused picture of cuts. Grants made early in the budget year couldn't be cut; others were harder hit. The "equity" program was largely restored. The Detroit Symphony grant appeared to have been restored.
- Horse race track cities — grants to help Livonia, Northville and Hazel Park cope with traffic and crime were largely restored, according to Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville. Engler had wanted to eliminate the aid.
- Mental health — fully funded except for some travel, Geake said. The supplemental bill contained \$3 million to offset earlier 9.2 percent cuts made last December.
- Youth Corps — largely cut.
- AFDC (aid to families with dependent children) — part of the 9.2 percent cuts were restored.
- Payments to foster care parents — restored.
- Adoption subsidies — restored.
- County medical facilities grants — restored.
- Employee furloughs — mandated; all classified employees will be laid off four days by Sept. 30. Exceptions: prison guards, mental hospital workers, State Police troopers.
- Budget stabilization fund — tapped for \$230 million. (Engler wanted to take less; House Speaker Lewis Dodak, D-Birch Run, had wanted to take more than \$300 million.)
- General assistance — cuts for the able bodied, replaced by expanded job training offerings.

OCC takes news in stride

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Officials at Oakland Community College (OCC) will be keeping a close eye on Lansing as lawmakers grapple with the new state budget, including state appropriations for the coming year.

But the school will not be seriously hurt if lawmakers do what they say they will do — namely defer state aid payments in June and July, according to Anthony D. Jarson, OCC vice chancellor.

News that lawmakers may take out state aid payments for June and July — and reinstate them retroactively later this fall — concerns Jarson and, very likely, other OCC officials.

But deferring aid will not cause a budget crunch or cash crisis, Jarson said.

"We've been notified state aid will be deferred," he said. But OCC has enough money in reserve to ease any pain.

The school will lose some money, he said. Funds that would have been invested to draw interest will have to be used in lieu of the deferred state aid.

THE OCC BOARD of Trustees is scheduled to receive and approve the 1991-92 budget Tuesday. It calls for expenditures of about \$66 million, up from the previous year's budget of \$63 million.

New developments in aiding mentally ill up for discussion

The Oakland County Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Michigan will hear about new developments in rehabilitation at their general meeting at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 27.

Dave Hatter, district manager for the South Oakland office of the Michigan Rehabilitation Service, is the

speaker for the discussion in the Administration Building Auditorium on the south side of William Beaumont Hospital, 13 Mile Road near Woodward, in Royal Oak.

The public is welcome at no charge. Refreshments will be served.



Helping the homeless

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners last week presented a proclamation to Michigan National Bank as the first corporation in Oakland County to provide temporary shelter to the homeless people who are part of the South Oakland Shelter. Gathered at their Farmington Hills headquarters for the presentation are in the front row: Dorothy Robinson, Elaine

Nesbitt, Lillian Melville, SOS director, Irene Wojciechowski, Middle row: Carol Curtis, Rise Blenslock, Nancy Finley and Carol Guyton. Back row: Tom Kimbo, Bruce Beaumont, Oakland County Commissioner Rudy Serra, D-Ferndale, Michigan National chairman Robert J. Mylod, Dianne Kimber and Chris Lock.

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Join our Prescriptives Custom Blend Experts Saturday, June 29 through Saturday, June 29. Call for your appointment: Oakland, 597-2355 Twelve Oaks, 344-6883

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