

School personnel get pay hike

Continued from Page 1

Bus drivers are represented by the Farmington Transportation Association. All are affiliates of the Michigan Education Association.

"I will cast a positive vote out of respect for my colleagues who are not here, although I myself am not supportive," said trustee James Abernethy, citing the non-instructional nature of the additional teachers' work day as a reason for his concern.

BOARD MEMBER Susan Rennels said the district must keep up with raises given to other employees in Oakland County. "These are only one-year contracts," Rennels said. "We need to maintain good teachers."

"Having lived through a strike, I know that there are no winners," said board President Jack Cotton. "It tore the community apart. The first people who came in are the parents. When those children aren't in school, they're the ones clamoring to get the damn schools open."

DURING the 1990-91 school year, the average Farmington public school teacher earned \$48,000, said Susan Zurvalic, director of employee relations. The 1990 census showed

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— trustee James Abernethy

that the average household income in Farmington Hills was \$63,898, she said.

"It's my pleasure to be here in Farmington," he added. "I'm fortunate to work with the kind of people I work with. The community is just outstanding. We have a lot going for us."

He also praised Zan Alley, chief negotiator, and commended the unions for being willing to "look at new ways to resolve old problems."

Alley said she seldom hears that publicly from a superintendent. "This was an unusual year in bargaining both in the process and in the results," Alley said. "How nice to have settled contracts. It is the first time in my experience that we have had all four units settled in this time frame."

TWO YEARS ago, the district and

union groups narrowly avoided a strike.

Support personnel union president Sally Krause said she was pleased with the contract. "This year we understood what the district is going through. We worked very hard, and both sides worked well together."

"I think everyone is excited about going back to school," Dick Hollowell, custodial union president, concurred, saying this was "one of the earliest settlements we've had. I'm very pleased. It was an excellent example of win-win bargaining."

Richard DeVries, a parent who has made two unsuccessful bids for a school board seat, severely criticized the teachers' settlement at Tuesday's meeting.

"After adjusting for the 0.6-percent raise awarded for extra time, this contract gives a 5.4-percent in-

crease to our teachers," DeVries said. "This is far out of line with raises being given in the private sector. The district cannot claim poverty and give such huge raises relative to what the rest of the community enjoys."

"A total raise of 6 percent in today's economic climate is unreasonable."

AVERAGE TEACHER settlements in Oakland County for the coming school year provide for salary increases of more than 6.4 percent, Zurvalic said. "The average increase in the cost of living as measured by the (urban) Consumer Price Index rose 5.48 percent."

"We're very pleased with this settlement and the positive approach both sides took toward these negotiations," Zurvalic said.

Contract discussions began in April between the district and a coalition representing the three unions. The previous contracts, all two-year agreements, expired June 30 for the members of the non-teachers unions, with the teachers union's contract expiring Aug. 25.

CUTS in state aid and failure of a proposed tax increase in February caused concerns about finances in the Farmington district. More than 150 positions were eliminated.

The school board also approved a \$3.08-per-day pay increase Tuesday for substitute teachers, bringing their daily wage to \$78.18.

Raises for non-union employees will be decided within the next two months, Zurvalic said. Discussions are under way between the district and negotiators for the Farmington Association of School Administrators, whose contract expired June 30. The administrators' union covers building-level administrators.

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police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

• TRAILER FIRE

A resident of the Flamingo Trailer Park, 22600 Middlebelt, north of Nine Mile, was overcome by smoke, when his mobile home caught fire just after 9:30 p.m. Aug. 6, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

A neighbor had removed the man from the trailer. When firefighters arrived they found flames throughout the front two-thirds of the trailer. Community Emergency Medical Services ambulance personnel checked the man for injuries and transported him to Botsford General Hospital.

The cause of the fire is undetermined. Damage was estimated at \$2,700.

• CAR FIRE

A cigarette is believed to have caused a fire in a car traveling on 14 Mile Road in Farmington Hills Aug. 6, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

The cigarette apparently ignited the upholstered seats in the car. Damage was estimated at \$110.

• DECK FIRE

Damage was estimated at \$2,500

when fire broke out on a deck of a house on Sylvan Lane, Aug. 7, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

When firefighters arrived they found the small deck smoldering. The southwest corner of the house also was damaged. The cause of the fire was undetermined.

• THEFTS REPORTED

An equalizer valued at \$450 was reported stolen from a 1989 Jeep at Bob Saka Olds, 35300 Grand River, Aug. 7-8.

Baby furniture and other baby shower gifts valued \$1,714 were reported stolen from a 1984 Chevrolet on Purdue, Aug. 6.

An oscilloscope valued at \$2,554 was reported stolen from a 1990 Oldsmobile on Country Club Drive, Aug. 4.

Approximately \$150 cash was reported stolen from a unit at the Farmington Manor Apartments, 30200 Nine Mile, Aug. 6-8.

• DAMAGE REPORTED

Damage was estimated at \$400 when someone drove a front-end loader belonging to a nearby construction site and plowed into a fire hydrant on Freedom Road, Aug. 7-8. Water gushed out when the hydrant was hit. No damage was reported to the front-end loader.

State Rep. praises suggested PAC limit

By Greg Kowalski
staff writer

Saying that lawmakers should "get their house into order," state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, reported that a state House Republican task force has prepared a series of recommendations to limit contributions by political action committees.

"I think there's been a general feeling of mistrust in politicians," she said. "One area is the perception of PACs."

PACs allow organizations to solicit funds to donate to politicians, in essence creating special interest groups to fund causes they support.

"It's kind of gotten out of control," Dolan said. "Some (legislators) totally rely on them," she said, because they give the incumbent the advantage of having established support.

"The challengers have a big obstacle to overcome."

Dolan said that PACs contributed about \$7.5 million to all state, legislative and local candidates in 1988. That figure rose to nearly \$11.4 million in 1990.

Oakland Republican Party chairman James Alexander found himself on the same side of the fence with Democratic party chairman Donald Tucker in opposing corporate contributions.

"It's very dangerous when a PAC becomes a tool (of company hierarchy) to extract money from underlings in a campaign," Tucker said. In general PACs have been useful tools, Tucker said.

"They've been very important to groups such as unions, retirees, abortion (foes and supporters) regardless of their political stripes. They can do a great deal of good."

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