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# Police union, city to meet informally

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Representatives for the city and the public officers union are scheduled to meet informally today.

Farmington Public Safety officers have been without a contract since Dec. 31. Contract talks broke off in October.

The meeting could be an attempt to head off arbitration. A pre-arbitration hearing date has been set for June 29.

City Manager Frank Lauhoff refused to go into specifics about today's session, which he termed a "departmental private meeting."

"I can't talk to you about it," Lauhoff said. "This is pre-arbitration and everything else."

"This is a time where we're

**'This is a time where we're going to talk about part of the arbitration process and try to work on some things.'**

City Manager Frank Lauhoff

going to talk about part of the arbitration process and try to work on some things."

Farmington Police Officers Association president James Madigan sees any meeting as a positive sign.

"We're willing to listen to what's going on," Madigan said. "... We'll do a marathon bargaining session, and we're asked to do that."

Wages and longevity pay are main sticking points. Officers

want pay comparable to other public safety departments in Oakland County.

A Farmington PSO earns between \$25,599 and \$38,261, which lags behind other county public safety departments. Public safety officers also do firefighting in addition to police work.

The city wants to hold spending, citing the recent passage of Proposal A which caps assessments. That will cut revenue the city receives from property taxes.

The stalemate could mark the first time the city and its public safety officers have gone to arbitration. The process is considered time consuming and costly, some say as much as \$20,000 to \$25,000 for each side.

Arbitration is also somewhat risky. An arbitrator has to choose either the city's or union's final offer.

"There could be a price to pay for both sides by going to arbitration," Madigan said. "The mere cost of going to arbitration ... but the things you can lose. There are items you can win and there are items you can lose."

Lauhoff agreed. "The city always hopes to avoid that," he said. "I think both sides want to avoid that."

# Assistant principal appeals suit's dismissal

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Harrison High assistant principal Norman Dickson is appealing after all six counts in his age discrimination lawsuit against the Farmington Public School District were thrown out of Oakland County Circuit Court.

Dickson, 55, is suing the district, charging he was passed over for the principal's position because of age. Harde Horn, 41, was hired as Harrison principal in June 1993.

Dickson has asked for in excess of \$10,000 damages and to be appointed principal. Circuit Court Judge Robert Anderson granted summary dispositions to the remaining two counts of the suit May 3, which included the charge of age discrimination. Anderson dismissed four counts March 28.

An appeal has been filed with

**'We feel we have a tremendous case. Mr. Dickson will have his day in court. We feel the judge made errors of law, and we're appealing those errors.'**

attorney Jamil Akhtar

Michigan Court of Appeals, said Dickson's attorney Jamil Akhtar.

"We feel we have a tremendous case," Akhtar said. "Mr. Dickson will have his day in court."

"We feel the judge made errors of law, and we're appealing those errors."

Akhtar said they're looking at a court date sometime in 1996. Dickson could not be reached for comment.

An attorney representing the school district said he has not been notified formally of the appeal.

"That's his right. If he wishes to appeal it he certainly can," said attorney Douglas Witters.

"... I believe the court of appeals will affirm the circuit court judge's decision."

Dickson filed the suit in circuit court in July 1993, naming the district, the board of education and former superintendent Michael Flanagan as defendants.

The suit was later amended to include the administrators' union, the Farmington Association of School Administrators.

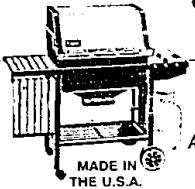
Dickson has been with the dis-



Norman Dickson

trict since 1969 and has been an assistant principal at all three high schools.

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