

# This time OCC will fight for tax

BY TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

This time you'll see a campaign for the Oakland Community College millage proposal.

Voters in the OCC district will decide on Monday, June 12, a proposal for an 0.8-mill, property-tax increase for seven years. June 12 is the date of annual board elections in school districts.

"Last time we went for the 'yes' voters. The public didn't know about it," said trustee Carol Crew. Crew said an ad should quote the staff member who said: "Next time you call 911, you'll be helped by someone trained at OCC."

"We need some ads, some yard signs," said board chair Janice Simmons. "On the day of the election, people will have to be active at the polls."

"We have to find someone who has run, lost and won millage elections," said trustee Sandra Ritter. "We can't stay in-house. Yard signs are great."

"It has to be a grass-roots strategy, working with PTAs, PTOs and board members," said Chancellor Patsy Calkins. "Obviously, unions would be part of this strategy."

"We have a lot of negative things," warned vice-chair Judith

## OCC MILLAGE

Wiser, citing a June 8 vote on a fraction of a mill for the SMART bus system and other school district money requests.

OCC voters rejected a March 16 proposal for one mill in perpetuity by a 55-45 margin. The campaign used a telephone bank and on-campus signs to contact 30,000 students and 180,000 former students of the two-year college. The poor turnout — fewer than 44,000 — led many OCC leaders to seek new tactics.

If approved, the property tax hike would add \$25.5 million to the revenue stream, raising the total to \$97.5 million. Top priorities for the new money in the first year: major maintenance projects, \$13 million; capital equipment, \$6 million; and new academic programs, \$6 million.

Eight-tenths of a mill would amount to 80 cents per \$1,000 of taxable value. It would be a tax increase of \$40 to the owner of a house with a market value of \$100,000 and \$50 on a \$200,000 home.

The tax would start in summer of 1995 and be collected until the summer of 2001.

OCC trustees made three decisions in setting the election: ■ They chose to be on the ballot with all K-12 school board elections plus money proposals in Troy, Huron Valley, South Lyon, Clarendonville and Brandon school districts.

"The two districts that supported our (March 16) proposal had their own," said trustee Anne Scott. "We won on their coattails. Those superintendents said, 'We're a team and we'll help you.'"

Scott added that an election prior to the start of the new fiscal year was necessary for employee morale.

Chuck Neumann, math professor who heads the OCC faculty union, said it recommended a June 12 effort.

The proposal was trimmed 20 percent from one full mill on March 16 to 0.8 mill.

Conventional wisdom holds that it's best to ask for a full mill because many voters will misread fractions and interpret 0.8 mill as 8 mills.

Two board members held out for a full mill but lost. Said trustee Douglas Wakefield: "If you have a hole in the dike and it takes a bag of cement to fix it, then eight-tenths of a bag won't

fill it. I think we need a mill." Added trustee Carol Crew: "I feel my integrity is hurt if I say we need a half-mill now when we need a mill before."

But Chancellor Calkins and vice-chair Judith Wiser said voters had said no to a full mill, and was necessary to trim.

■ The proposal will be for seven years rather than in perpetuity. Seven was a compromise between those who wanted 10 years and those who wanted five.

If the June 12 proposal wins, OCC's total tax rate will be about 1.65 mills. That's higher than the 30-year average of 1.4 mills and a little below the 1979 high of 1.7 mills.

In 1965 voters approved one mill in perpetuity for general purposes. The operation of

Headlee tax limitation amendment to the state constitution has whittled that to 0.85 mills currently. In the past, OCC boards levied unvoted fractions of a mill for construction but no longer can do so.

Got a general interest question on the OCC ballot proposal? Call Tim Richard's Touch-Tone voice mail number: 1-313-953-2047, Ext. 1831. Answers will be published in upcoming editions.

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# OCC students face double whammy

BY TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

Oakland Community College students could take a double hit next year if voters reject a second tax proposal on June 12.

First, they could see a big tuition increase over the present \$46 per credit hour to balance the budget without layoffs.

Second, they could lose the new tuition credit against their state income taxes if the OCC board hikes tuition more than 3 percent, the rate of consumer price inflation. Public Act 7 of 1995 will give the tax break only if OCC had held the line at \$47.38 a credit hour.

"I've always been either a no voter or a reluctant yes on tuition hikes," said trustee Douglas Wakefield, of Southfield, who brought up the topic Monday.

The board deferred action until after the June 12 election, at which voters will be asked to raise the property tax for seven years by 0.8 mill (80 cents per \$1,000 of

taxable value). The tax would cost \$40 on a \$100,000 house and \$50 on a \$200,000 house. It would add \$25.5 million to a total budget of \$97.5 million.

If the proposal fails, OCC would have a projected budget of \$76 million and revenues of \$72 million. Covering the \$4 million shortfall with heavy layoffs would require a tuition hike of \$10 per credit hour, Wakefield calculated. Such an increase shocked most trustees, especially since they had promised to hold tuition flat for five years if the March 16 one-mill proposal had passed.

At \$56 a credit hour, OCC would leap to No. 2 in the state, behind St. Clair's \$57.85 and ahead of Mott's \$55, trustee Carol Crew of Waterford said. Currently, OCC's \$46 tuition rate is 16th, with Gogebic at 29th with \$32 per credit hour.

"I've never heard St. Clair or Mott students complain," said Paul McCullough, student repre-

sentative on the OCC board.

Trustee Sandra Ritter of Waterford was unhappy at even discussing a massive tuition hike prior to the election for fear that negative voters would say, "They've already fixed their problem."

With neither a tax hike nor tuition hike, a \$4 million deficit could translate into layoffs of 100 of the 798 employees, a college spokesman said. No announcement is planned until after the election, said George Cartasina, community relations director.

Meanwhile, OCC trustees spent most of their two-hour meeting on election strategy.

Terry Kot, a Waterford school district administrator with a long success record, warned, "We've got 8,000 no votes on anything. They're committed. They're against taxes in any way. They'll see cars at the precinct, figure there's an election, and go in and vote no without even knowing

what they're voting on."

Kot advised getting a group of committed yes voters, assigning each one a group of five voters and having the core group guide the others with a mailing, phone calls for questions, a phone call the night before the election, and another phone call if they haven't voted by 6 p.m. election day.

"If people tell you they voted no because they were called too often," Kot said, "they were going to vote no anyway."

OCC officials have decided informally they will use campaign contributions to buy some advertising. In the March 16 campaign, they relied largely on a telephone bank to roust out 118,000 former students and 30,000 current students. That proposal went down, 18,000 to 23,000.

PTAs and Civic groups who want a speaker on OCC's millage or any other OCC topic can call the community relations office at 1-810-540-1540.

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# Hills offers more recycle alternatives

Beginning May 1 there will be changes in the Farmington-area's curbside recycling program. Changes include:

■ Magazines and catalogs will be accepted.

■ Clean aluminum foil and food trays will be accepted.

■ Labels can be left on cans.

■ Coupons and glossy advertisements can be recycled with newspapers.

■ Plastic tubs and trays or any wide-mouthed plastic containers such as butter tubs, yogurt containers, cups and trays, are no longer accepted (even those coded

with a number 1 or 2). These containers are not accepted by plastic recyclers.

It is important to follow the correct preparation guidelines before putting items in the recycling bin. Improperly prepared material may be left in the bin. The guidelines are:

■ Magazines and catalogs must be bundled. Tie them securely with string or use strong rubber band. Place them inside the bin next to newspapers. Magazines must be sorted from newspapers for marketing purposes.

■ Place newspapers and all in-

serts including the coupon and advertising sections in the bin loose, tucked to one side, or in a brown paper grocery bag.

■ Number 1 and 2 narrow mouthed plastic bottles should have lids and rings discarded. The label can stay on. Motor oil and antifreeze containers are not accepted.

■ Discard lids and rinse containers of clear, green and brown glass bottles and jars. Labels can stay on. No window glass, light bulbs, dishes, ceramics or Pyrex are allowed.

■ Rinse or wash tin cans, alumi-

nium cans, aluminum foil and aluminum food trays. Labels can stay on cans.

In addition to these changes, the recycling trucks will be on the road. The new trucks will have two compartments, one for magazines and newspaper, and one of the remaining recyclables. Instead of the driver sorting on the curb, the material will be sorted at the Material Recovery Facility in Southfield.

The state-of-the-art facility sorts containers mechanically using magnets, screens and air blowers.

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