

# County will cut support of policeless townships

By ROBERT KIPPER

OAKLAND COUNTY—Does the county have an obligation to help pay for police protection in townships that lost their police departments?

That was the question again before the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Thursday. To a larger degree than ever before, commissioners answered that the days of the county helping less developed townships with the costs of police protection are ending.

AT PRESENT, all but 11 townships in the county have their own police departments, supported by local taxes.

The 11 department-less townships contract with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department for police protection.

It is estimated that each of the sheriff's deputies on contract to a township costs \$20,500. The townships are asked to pay \$17,850 per deputy. The county pays the remaining almost \$3,000 per deputy.

The original justification for this county assistance was that the towns needed additional help in providing basic police protection. It seems to be giving way to a new attitude on the commission.

As Commissioner Cary Dearborn, (R-22), of Birmingham, put it: "It's time townships take on the responsibility of providing police protection."

AS ANOTHER commissioner explained, when the county agreed to provide deputies on a contract basis it was understood that townships would be asked to pay more and more of the cost. Eventually, he said, the day would come when townships assumed the full expense.

## analysis

Thursday's action by commissioners brought that day closer.

Actually, commissioners considered only a related matter: How much the county should charge to five townships who wished to increase their number of deputies. However, their decision set something of a precedent for how the commission may deal with existing deputy contracts when they expire.

THE FIVE TOWNSHIPS—Avon, Commerce, Highland, Independence and Orion—asked for a total of nine new deputies, expecting the cost of \$17,850 per man would be continued. The men would be hired with a federal funds supplied through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

Several commissioners saw the request as an opportunity for the county to begin charging more for deputy services. The county personnel practices committee recommended that an increase in contract should cost the full \$20,500.

The full board approved a compromise measure Thursday after more than a hour of debate. The townships would be charged only \$17,850 per deputy this year. But, within three years, the townships will be expected to pay the full \$20,500.

MUCH OF Thursday's debate followed familiar lines. The two most popular views:

- Crime prevention is a county-wide obligation. The county has a duty to help less-equipped townships

provide basic police service. Even citizens from other areas can benefit from crime-free outlying areas, where many of the county's recreational facilities are located.

- If townships want police protection, they should pay for it. It is the responsibility of the township residents to county taxpayers, to pay for police protection.

Of this second argument holds that taxpayers in areas that have their own police departments are being taxed twice for police protection. With their city or township taxes they support local police departments. Then, some of their county taxes help cover expenses in areas without departments.

Still, according to many commissioners Thursday, the county's share in the subsidy to townships is comparatively low.

"IF THIS COUNTY can't absorb \$27,000 (the anticipated cost to the county for the nine new deputies) for crime prevention in the township," said Commissioner Bernard Lennion (D-18), of Ferndale, "then there's something wrong."

Commissioner Patrick Nowak (R-25), of Farmington, said it would be unfair to suddenly raise the price for

deputies, especially after townships participating in the CETA program expected the same contract price to prevail.

However, Commissioner Paul E. Kasper (R-23), of Bloomfield Hills, argued that it's time townships are asked to pay more of the full cost. Commissioner Dearborn added that, if not discontinued, the subsidy would continue to grow and grow.

Finally, it was the attitude of Commissioner Wallace Gabler (R-12), of Royal Oak, that prevailed. He offered the compromise measure that passed the board by a 16 to 8 vote.

"LET'S MOVE to provide police protection that's necessary," Gabler said, "but let's do it realistically."

If the commission eventually raises the county's per-deputy and regular contract, many light-budgeted townships may be forced to cutback their number of deputies or, at least, to postpone immediate plans to get more deputies.

On the other hand, the move could make townships more self-sufficient. They may be forced to ask their residents for special millage to increase police patrols or even to begin meeting the expense of creating police departments on their own.



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## Group encourages ecology interest

By CAROL HASKIN

The energy crisis and the sluggish economy have cooled the fire under the once-hot ecology issue, but the East Michigan Environmental Action Council (EMEAC) is fanning the part to fan the flames.

One of EMEAC's most popular services is its Speakers Bureau. Church, social and service groups interested in certain areas of environmental protection can call EMEAC who will design a program for them on the subject.

EMEAC coordinator Mrs. Anita Novak explained that the 15-member board of directors, many of whom are experts in the biological and legal professions, are well-educated in general environmental areas. A group is interested in a specific environmental problem, from house to ecology to energy to pollution, it can be provided with a speaker.

FILMS AND PRINTED material are also used in these programs, as they are in the presentations EMEAC has specially prepared for schools.

Slide shows for elementary school classes, Mrs. Novak said, are designed to give children pictures of the environment. For example, children become acquainted with the air pollution problem by symbolically filling a balloon with dirty air.

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