

Senators change meaning of 'meeting' to exclude public

The Michigan Senate has amended an open meetings bill to allow closed-door "informational" meetings.

The amendment was offered by Sen. Daniel Cooper (D-Oak Park) and supported by three other area senators—Donald Bishop (R-Rochester), Bill Huffman (D-Madison Heights) and Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth). Sen. William Faust (D-Westland) was absent.

Two outstate senators took the unusual step of filing protests when the 24 vote was taken.

COOPER'S AMENDMENT changed the definition of a "meeting" of a public body to say that it "does not include an on-site inspection of a project or program, or a chance meeting, informational session, or a social gathering neither planned nor intended for the major purpose of deliberating toward or acting upon a matter over which the public body has jurisdiction or advisory power."

Its purpose was to remove many public officials' fear that they might violate the law anytime and any place they discuss public affairs with another member.

The controversy was over whether "informational" sessions should be closed to the public.

Sen. Dale Kildee (D-Flint), in a formal protest, said that "under the guise of informational session, the Flint City Council a few years ago was holding sessions closed to the public and closed to the press."

"At that time, the editor of the Flint Journal, Glen Bossonneault, sued in circuit court, and Judge Donald R. Freeman issued an injunction against the Flint City Council from holding such meetings."

"I THINK the term 'informational session' can be used to exclude the public from those matters discussed that are rightfully the property of the public. I think this creates a dangerous situation for the public," said Kildee.

Sen. Gary Corbin (D-Go), while saying he didn't doubt Cooper's integrity in offering the amendment, recalled such informational meetings when he was a member of the Genesee County board.

"I'm sure that became very much abused. I was opposed to that then, and I'm still opposed to that now. It seems to me that the phraseology of 'informational meetings' or sessions is relatively loose and can be abused," said Corbin.

The amendment was to Senate Bill 820, the so-called Plawcki Bill. It was passed by the Senate and sent to the House, where the Towns and Counties Committee is considering two much broader bills aimed at outlawing secret meetings of public bodies.

Joan Newby heads county liaison office

Joan G. Newby has been appointed director of the Oakland County Department of Community and Minority Affairs.

Mrs. Newby, a Pontiac resident, will be responsible for establishing direct lines of communications between community groups and county government. She will keep these groups informed of services provided by county government and, in turn, will provide government officials with information on the capabilities and functions of various community groups.

"Through this kind of communication and coordination, government will be better able to join with active volunteer groups in addressing specific community problems and concerns," said Daniel T. Murphy, county executive. "We will also be able to avoid the duplication of effort which results when volunteer groups and government work in the same areas without direct communications."

MRS. NEWBY also will assist individual citizens with problems that can be alleviated by existing government programs and services.

"Many citizens aren't able to take advantage of government services because they aren't aware of their existence," Murphy pointed out. "This new department will help bring the problems and the solutions closer together."

MRS. NEWBY has been an instructor with the Oakland University-ward Bound summer fine arts program and a supervisor of student teachers at Wayne State University.

She has a degree in music education from Kansas State University and has completed the requirements for a master's degree in communication and media studies from Antioch College.

She is the author of "Songs for My Children," a collection of photographs and songs for young children about black heroes and heroines.

Mrs. Newby is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Progressive Action Committee for Equality.

Hospital insurance deductible is raised

The Medicare hospital insurance deductible will be \$104 starting Jan. 1.

"A Medicare patient who goes into a hospital and starts a benefit period will be responsible for the first \$104 of the hospital bill," Anderson said.

The 1975 deductible was \$92. Under the Medicare law, the amount of the deductible is tied to the average cost of one day's stay in a hospital.

"THE INCREASE to \$104 for 1976 is a result of a review of hospital costs during 1974," Anderson said. "However, the present \$92 deductible remains in effect throughout any benefit period that started in 1975 even if the period of hospitalization goes into 1976."

Under the law, the increase in the deductible means there also will be increases starting Jan. 1 in three other amounts Medicare patients pay for covered care.

For a hospital stay of over 60 days, the patient will pay \$26 a day (up from \$23) for covered services furnished on the 61st through the 90th day.

FOR a post-hospital stay of over 20 days in a skilled-nursing facility, the patient will pay \$13 a day (up from \$11.50) for the 21st through the 100th day.

For reserve days used—after 90 days of hospital care in a benefit period—a patient will pay \$52 a day, up from \$46.

Medicare hospital insurance helps pay for hospital stays and certain post-hospital care for people 65 and over, disabled people under 65 who have been entitled to social security disability benefits for 24 consecutive months or more, and many people who have permanent kidney failure.

Medicare is administered by the Social Security Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

UM-D reappoints Terry A. Barr

Terry A. Barr has been reappointed to a second and final four-year term on the University of Michigan-Dearborn's 18-person Citizens Advisory Committee.

Barr, a Birmingham resident and Southfield businessman, is an original member of the committee. His term will expire Dec. 31, 1979.

The committee provides the university regents and administration with an independent viewpoint on issues affecting the operations and development of the UM-D campus.

A University of Michigan graduate, Barr played football both for U-M and the Detroit Lions before turning to a business career. He is president of the Terry Barr Sales Agency in Southfield, a firm which represents various dealers to Detroit area automobile companies.

onds The brothers practiced their early aerodynamic experiments and made many of the parts for that historic airplane in their bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio. That shop now stands at Greenfield Village. Next door is their house, also from Dayton, where the Wright Brothers lived at the time of their first flight.

Practice makes perfect

Man's first powered flight was made by the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, N.C. on Dec. 17, 1903. Orville Wright was the first to soar over the sand dunes on that morning, managing to stay aloft for 12 seconds. At noon, his brother Wilbur kept the new flying machine in the air for 59 seconds.

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