

OCC trustees debate Highland renovation

By TIM RICHARD

Oakland Community College trustees are counting dollars cautiously as they study plans for a new library and renovation of old Highland Hall on the Highland Lakes campus in Walled Lake.

The reason: If they skimp on construction, they have to pay more for light and heat — which comes out of the operating budget down the road, leaving less for teaching.

If they spend more on capital construction, they can spend less to light

and heat buildings. On the other hand, they can't spend more than provided for in their bond issue.

And so the board on Oct. 11 held up action on approving building plans until it can restudy the bond issue.

THE HANGUP came on renovating Highland Hall, a structure budgeted for \$400,000 in improvements.

"I come from that part of the county," said trustee Sandra Ritter, "and it seems that part is left for last. This is a Band-Aid approach," she said, referring to a lack of energy-efficient win-

dows in architects' plans.

John Castellana, of the firm of TMP Associates, Bloomfield Hills architects, said energy-efficient windows would cost \$300,000, and the architects had been told, "Classroom space is the highest priority."

Plans so far include a new north side entrance, interior remodeling and a new reception area for student services, interior remodeling of the bookstore (all first floor), a new lecture area and four examination rooms for medical assistants instruction, new classrooms for nursing and classroom space for dental lab assistants (all second floor). The third floor would be largely unchanged.

To Mrs. Ritter's question about whether the building should be replaced, the architects replied negatively. It's structurally sound, it has been

mechanically renovated within the last five years, and its space is good for medical assistants training, they said.

THE LIBRARY — or Learning Resources Center, as it's called — is a \$2.9 million project aimed for fall 1981 opening. It will also house the business science addition classrooms.

It will be located between the student parking lot and other campus buildings, and students are expected to use it in winter to avoid exposure to the elements.

IN OTHER physical plant matters, the board awarded contracts:

- For a curtain to divide the gymnasium on the Orchard Ridge campus — \$7,152 to Leach Equipment Co., lowest of two bidders. Purpose is to allow two different activities to be conducted at the same time.

- For 20 additional storage and display cabinets for Highland Lakes science laboratories — \$8,750 to Landstra Associates, lowest of four bidders.

- An electronic timing system and scoreboard for the Orchard Ridge campus pool — \$19,665 to Omega Electronic Equipment, lower of two bidders. Equipment includes a touchpad for precision timing of swimming events.

- Vote on buying the electronic pool equipment was 5-2, with trustees Lila Johnson and David Hackett opposing it.

County slashes '80 road budget

Both the construction and operating budgets of the Oakland County Road Commission will be reduced in 1980.

The building that is done will be oriented to safety and the capacity of existing roads, said managing director John Grubba.

A public hearing on both budgets is scheduled for 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 7 in the commissioners auditorium of the Oakland County Service Center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

THE \$10.4 million construction budget is down 36 percent from the current year's \$16.3 million, Grubba said.

State gasoline and weight taxes are anticipated at \$4.6 million (compared to \$5.2 million this year), federal matching funds are \$4.3 million (\$5.3 million currently); local matching funds are \$1.6 million (down from \$4.8 million).

Said Grubba: "Not a single mile will be added to the road commission's 2,507-mile road system. Rather, projects proposed are to increase the safety and capacity of the existing roads."

"The safety emphasis is reflected in choices made on all projects, and is particularly responsible for \$1.5 million devoted to such things as railroad crossing improvements, bridge replacements, guard rail improvements, high-hazard curve improvements and pavement marking projects."

Major construction items include:

- 4.9 miles of widening to four and five lanes, \$2.3 million.
- 7.8 miles of two-lane paving of unpaved roads, \$2.6 million.
- 29.3 miles of resurfacing paved roads, \$1.7-million.
- 27 intersection improvements, \$2.1 million.
- Other safety projects, \$1.5 million.

Subdivision streets, \$140,000. This item is state money contributed to special assessment districts, for which local units of government and property owners pay 90 percent of the cost.

THE OPERATING budget of \$34.9 million is now down 7 percent from the current \$37.6 million.

Although state gas and weight tax revenues are expected to be slightly higher, federal and local revenues are expected to be down substantially, Grubba said.

The construction portion of this budget will be hardest hit — \$8.8 million in 1980 compared to \$14.1 million currently. Maintenance and traffic costs are eating up larger portions, the managing director said.

Although the number of jobs will be up only 3.2 percent, the cost of salaries and wages will be up 12 percent.

The direct cost of road maintenance is up 17.5 percent (\$11.6 million versus \$9.9 million currently), Grubba said.

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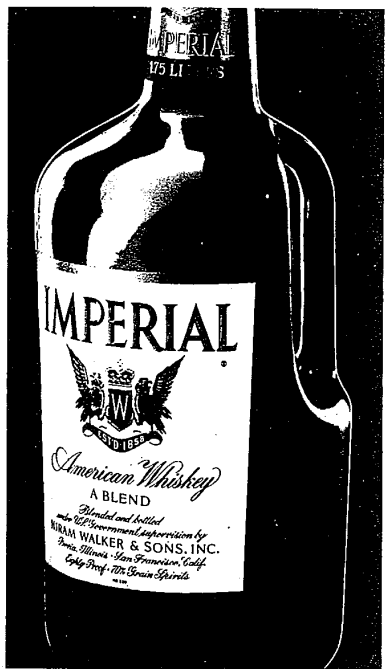
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