

Ouster of Wayne County sheriff faces uphill battle

Wayne County Commissioners may have a tough time ousting Sheriff William Lucas from office.

The commissioners last week voted unanimously 15-0 to subpoena Lucas to appear before them to explain why he should not be removed from office.

The commissioners say the sheriff should explain why he ignored the March 19 order to post a \$500,000 performance bond to ensure compliance with their budget allocations.

The move was called a first step in exercising the board's prerogative to remove Lucas from office for cause. But there are indications that the votes

needed — a two-thirds majority — aren't there.

Lucas' refusal to disband the sheriff's road patrol has caused a long-running battle with the commissioners. The commissioners in February ordered the layoff of some 257 road patrol deputies. Lucas refused to cooperate, ordered his men to stay on the job and has fought the layoffs in court.

Lucas' department is spending about \$100,000 each week in overtime, most of it resulting from his defiance of a the layoff order.

AN ARBITRATOR last month ruled the deputies must be paid since their

supervisor ordered them to work.

None of four county commissioners polled last week about the ouster movement felt that there are sufficient votes — 13 of the 27-member board — to remove Lucas.

None of the four gave the move more than 15 votes.

Lucas also has a faction of the board working to thwart a removal.

Commissioner Arthur Carter, D-Detroit, during debate last Thursday introduced a motion which called for county lawyers to furnish commissioners the legal rules needed to remove an elected official.

Carter wanted the rule sheet delivered by this Thursday.

The move would have meant the board was voting to remove Lucas while tacitly admitting it didn't know the rules for doing so. Some commissioners said Carter's move was a ploy to invalidate their proceeding against Lucas.

Commissioner James Rashid, D-Dearborn, a lawyer who favors Lucas' ouster, claimed Carter's amendment was intended to prove the commissioners are acting arbitrarily and capriciously.

LUCAS is attempting to prove in a court suit that the commissioners acted arbitrarily and capriciously when they ordered the layoff of his road patrol deputies last February.

Carter repeatedly sidestepped inquiries from Mary Dumas, R-Livonia, who sought to pin him down on exactly what his amendment would do. When asked if he would withdraw the amendment if promised a set of the rules immediately, Carter said no.

"If Mr. Carter wants a copy, let him get it," said Commissioner Ervin Steiner, R-Grosse Pointe. "The minute we publish it as a part of the record — if we make one brief misstep — we become the defendants," he said. "Why should we get into a trick bag like that?"

Commissioner William Runco, R-Dearborn, introduced a substitute motion requiring that the rules be delivered next week, but that they be rules for procedures during the hearing itself. It was approved unanimously.

The hearing to have Lucas explain why he should not be removed from office may take place today (Thursday).

The unanimous vote last week to call for Lucas' appearance was surprising since it came from a divided board which debated for hours, often bitterly, amidst charges of cronypism.

IN CALLING for the hearing, the board bypassed a second method of removing the sheriff from office.

Chief Assistant Corporation Counsel Edward Douglas said commissioners could also petition Gov. Milliken to remove Lucas based on his expenditures of unauthorized funds.

Choosing to pursue Lucas' removal because of his failure to post bond, instead of for his unauthorized spending, the board opted for a method that will require the two-thirds approval.

The sheriff last week also lost more of his base as the board ordered him in a voice vote to return all his road patrol cars and marine division boats to the board of auditors.

Insurance on the cars and boats expired June 30 and has not been renewed.

Also expired is the death and dismemberment insurance for members of the sheriff's bomb disposal squad.



William Lucas faces ouster move

Medicare: no cure-all but a benefit to many

Medicare covers only about 40 percent of health care costs, so most people need supplemental coverage.

Unless you are careful about what coverage you obtain, you could be paying for coverage you have already.

Medicare provides two separate kinds of insurance: hospital and medical. If you are 65 and receive Social Security benefits, you don't have to apply for hospital insurance unless you plan to continue working. Since this part of the program is financed by Social Security taxes, this coverage is free.

However, you must apply for Medicare medical insurance. The low premiums are withheld from your monthly Social Security check.

The best time to apply is during your enrollment period, which begins three months before your 65th birthday and ends three months after. If you enroll later, there's a penalty. Your monthly premium would be 10 percent higher for every year you delay enrolling.

Medicare hospital insurance helps pay the costs of a stay in a hospital or nursing facility, or for home health care. Coverage includes operating and recovery room costs, lab tests, X-rays and nursing services.

Medical insurance benefits help meet the cost of doctors' hospital services and other services such as renting or purchasing medical equipment and outpatient hospital treatment.

There are gaps in Medicare coverage, even if enrolled in both parts of the program. For example, hospital insurance pays for covered services during the first two months of a hospital stay, except for \$204, which you must pay. If your hospital stay is between two and three months, Medicare hospital insurance covers all but \$11 a day for each day during that period. After

three months, your daily share increases to \$102.

You must also pay the first \$60 of each year's medical bills. After that, Medicare medical insurance takes into account the amount of your bill, what your doctor usually charges for those services and the prevailing charge where you live.

If, say, Medicare covers \$450 a reasonable charge for your doctor's services, it will pay 80 percent of that amount, or \$360. Your doctor may accept that amount as full payment; if not, you must pay the difference.

Many health care expenses are not covered by Medicare. These include the cost of eyeglasses and hearing aids, dentures and routine dental care, prescription drugs and routine physical examinations.

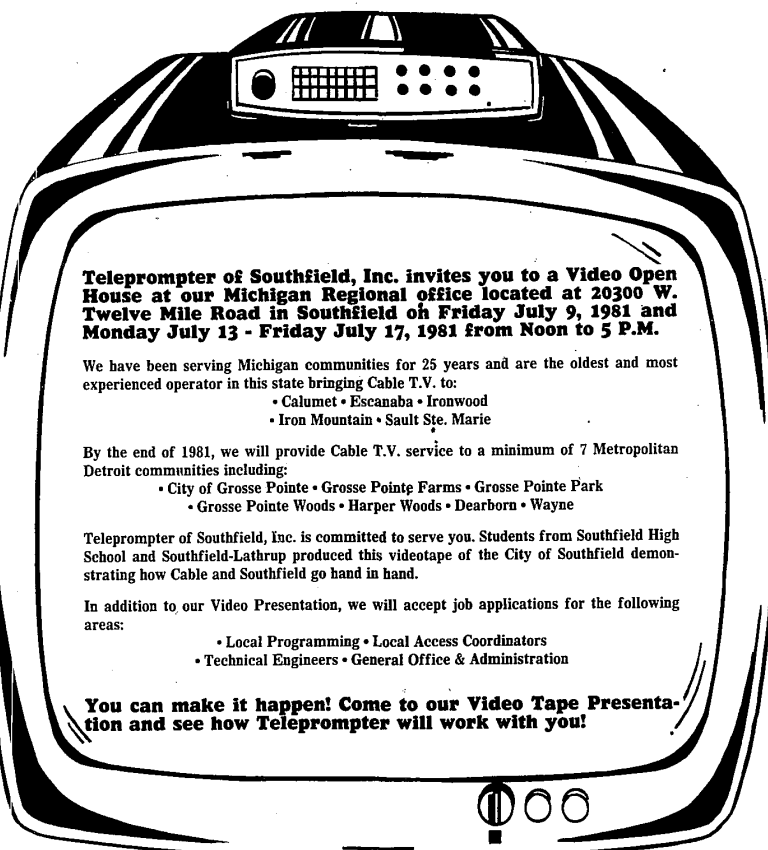
If you have a low income, some of Medicare's gaps can be met with Medicaid. Income levels qualifying for Medicaid vary from state to state, so check your local social services office to find out if you are eligible.

For most people, it is a good idea to buy a health insurance policy and fill the needs Medicare doesn't meet. Insurance companies and health maintenance organizations (HMOs) offer a wide variety of medigap policies.

If you are insured through a company plan, you may be able to extend the coverage after you retire. This can be an adequate supplement to Medicare, and less expensive than a policy purchased on your own. Your employer may pay part or all of the cost.

When you examine medigap insurance policies, be sure you are covered for the major medical expenses of a long, serious illness. Find out exactly what coverage the policy provides that Medicare doesn't.

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