

Service workers settle

By Diane Gale
staff writer

A new contract for Farmington city employees with temporary wage freezes over three years was unanimously approved by the city council Monday. The contract will cost the city approximately \$13,000 a year.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1455 agreed to a six month wage freeze in each of the three years. The contract affects 12 employees and is retroactive to July 1, 1983, and extends through June 30, 1986.

Wages were increased by 40 cents per hour effective January 1, 1984; 45 cents per hour January 1, 1985; and 50 cents per hour effective July 1, 1986.

The wage increases usually take place in July at the start of the city's budget year, and by postponing them to each January there is less of an impact on each budget year, City Manager Robert Deadman said.

"We're quite happy with the contract, because we're averaging 8 percent across the board for three consecutive years," said AFSCME local chairman Donald Gould.

Also, new employees or newly promoted workers must now wait for two years instead of one year for minimum wage allotted for their positions.

The city agreed to provide its self-insured dental program to retirees and their spouses. This will cost the city \$100 per year for the five retirees who are eligible, Deadman said.

Employees' life insurance will increase \$1,000 each July 1, of the new contract. This will cost the city approximately \$15 a year for each employee.

The maximum life insurance under the contract will be \$20,000 per employee effective July 1, 1985.

OTHER CONTRACT agreements include:

- A requirement that the city and union will pay for its own non-city employee witnesses who may be called in arbitration cases.
- Employees are responsible for notifying the city if there is any change in their home telephone numbers.
- A new process for employees to select and take annual vacations. The city continues to be the sole determiner as to when the vacations may be taken.
- The city is allowed to change its hospital insurance carrier as long as the benefits provided are equal to those presently offered.

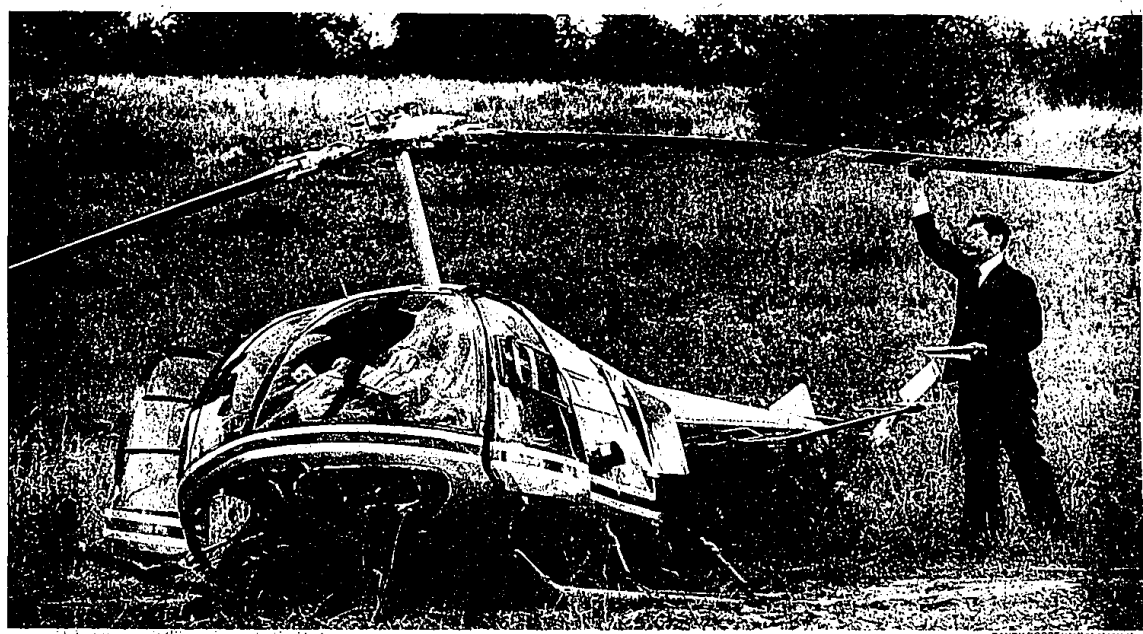
The AFSCME contract is similar to agreements made during the past two years for the police and fire department. All have been concessionary in terms of wage freezes, Deadman said.

"This is the last contract to expire during these economic times," he said.

Justifying the terms of the contract, Deadman emphasized that money the city receives from state shared revenues aren't assured, and funds garnered from State Equalized Valuation are stabilized and not increasing.

Deadman declined to comment on the requests made by the union during the closed negotiating period that began in May without a mediator.

"There was no mediator needed, because we knew we were going to get it," he said.



Federal officials arrived at the scene of the rush hour crash of a radio traffic helicopter Wednesday. An investigation is underway into the accident, which happened in a field near the Halsted-13 Mile area.

Practice run ends in real life emergency

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is investigating the Wednesday morning crash of a helicopter from which traffic reports are broadcast over a Detroit radio station.

The aircraft fell 100 feet into a sparsely-populated section of Farmington Hills, according to police officials.

The crash sent pilot Dennis Neubacher, a 30-year-old Dearborn resident

who regularly broadcasts traffic reports for radio station WJR, and passenger Terry Hoolihan, a 27-year-old student pilot from Pontiac, to Botsford Hospital, where they were treated for minor back injuries.

Neubacher, a licensed helicopter pilot since last April, regularly broadcasts traffic reports from the helicopter over the radio station.

Farmington Hills police and FAA officials believe Neubacher may have been practicing an emergency

maneuver called auto rotation, in which the aircraft is brought safely to the ground with no power, over the area near 13 Mile and Halsted roads.

But the emergency drill became the real thing, according to police.

"Apparently, they were practicing (the maneuver) and the engine actually did fail," said patrolman D.C. Loe of the Farmington Hills police department. Loe spoke as he viewed the crashed blue and green helicopter with WJR in huge white letters on its sides.

POLICE SAID that, after the accident, Neubacher walked from the crash site to a house on 13 Mile Road, a distance of about 200 yards. A resident, Lillian Graham, gave the pilot a blanket and called police.

Police arrived to find Neubacher and Hoolihan near the helicopter. The craft had a smashed windshield, crumpled landing skids and broken tail rotor.

The two were taken to Botsford by a Community Emergency Medical Service ambulance.

Some five FAA officials visited the hilly area, muddled by recent rains, shortly after the crash.

A crashed aircraft becomes the property of the National Transportation and Safety Organization, which usually commissions the FAA to investigate the crash, an FAA official said.

"We look at the altitude of the aircraft and try to see how it impacted with the ground," said John Noone, an

Voters give nod to maintaining millage

Voters in the Farmington School District last Tuesday passed a five-mill tax renewal, which will provide the district with more than \$5 million of its \$44.3 million operating budget.

The renewal passed, 893 to 454, in a district which contains approximately 55,000 voters.

"We're extremely pleased with the vote," said Lawrence G. Freedman, Farmington's assistant superintendent for instruction. "We look at it as a strong vote. These numbers — 893 to 454 — indicate a display of confidence and support for the programs here in the Farmington district."

Freedman added that the millage success was "a boost in terms of morale and incentive."

"It instills a certain sense of responsibility — and now we know we have to

live up to that responsibility," he said. "It also says to us that we're lucky to live in a district like Farmington, where the people support us."

THE FARMINGTON School District includes Farmington, most of Farmington Hills and a small portion of West Bloomfield. The district contains four voting precincts.

The proposal passed in all four precincts.

In Precinct No. 1 at the Farmington Training Center, the vote was 265 yes to 133 no. The yes votes outnumbered the nos, 334 to 151, at Precinct No. 2 at

Dunkel Middle School on 12 Mile Road.

The smallest vote was recorded at Precinct No. 3 at Warner Middle School on 14 Mile Road, where 72 voters voted yes and 53 voted no. Precinct No. 4, headquartered in East Middle School on Middlebelt, also opted for the

renewal, 184 votes to 100.

Some 45 absentee ballots were cast. Twenty-eight of them were yes votes.

According to school officials, one mill equals \$1,000,000 in Farmington, and the district levies 31.8 mills for operating purposes. The district is authorized by voters to levy 37.29 mills.

around, but this seems kind of strange. We're going to send it to the state police lab to see if it's dangerous."

The product's ingredients are not listed on the plastic bottles, which carry the name American Diversified Enterprises and a Phoenix, Ariz. address.

The couple, who police said was part of a sales team operating out of the Ramada Inn in Southfield, was released after being warned not to peddle anything in Farmington.

oral quarrel

What did you think of '83 festival?

In recent weeks a number of merchants in the downtown Farmington area have circulated a petition protesting this year's Farmington Founders' Festival as a "hooky took" affair which harms instead of enhances Farmington's reputation.

Several suggestions have been bandied about on what to do with the Festival in coming years including moving it to the City Park or disbanding it entirely.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THIS YEAR'S FOUNDERS' FESTIVAL? IN WHAT WAYS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IT CHANGED?

To answer this question, call 477-1488. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to respond. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, look in Monday's Observer.

what's inside

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Tennis courts will get better bounce

Balls should be bouncing a little better for Farmington-area tennis players now that the Farmington Board of Education has approved an improvement program for the eight courts at Farmington and Harrison high schools.

The board voted 7-0 to spend \$24,530 on the courts last Tuesday at its regular meeting.

The improvement program includes the repair of cracks and depressions in the asphalt surfaces, and replacing the posts which support the nets, according to Jack Lawing, Farmington's director of administrative services.

"We've had a considerable amount of cracking (of the courts) since the original installation, especially at Harrison where the ground is very unstable," Lawing said after Tuesday's meeting.

According to Lawing, the nylon nets are being replaced as necessary.

"Barring vandalism, we should get about four years out of a net," he said.

Nets are left on the courts at all times, Lawing said, but so far little vandalism has occurred.

Tennis courts at Farmington's public high schools — Farmington, Harrison and North Farmington — are open to the public when not being used for school or recreation programs.