

Plumbers' Strike Delays Opening

Harrison Will Not Be Ready By Sept. 8

FARMINGTON
Farmington School District will take legal action against the general contractor building the district's third high school which was scheduled to open in September.

The school board took the action after administrators reported the school has little chance of opening on Sept. 8.

TRUSTEE GARY LICHTMAN opened a verbal assault on the contractor after the board heard pessimistic reports from Business Manager William Prisk and other administrators.

Lichtman, angered by the delays on Harrison High on 13 Mile and other buildings urged a stronger stand with contractors.

"It's time for the district to stand on its hind legs and swat the contractors where it hurts—in the pocketbook," the trustee said.

Lichtman said the district's original agreement with Markward and Karas, the general contractor, called for the school to be completed by May 1.

THE BOARD granted a two-month delay, and then a plumbers' strike crippled the project, he added.

However, Lichtman noted the plumbers had failed to progress as far as they should have when they struck.

When Harry Stultz, director of building and grounds, said the building might be ready if plumbers work overtime or add men, Lichtman replied the general contractor should be responsible for the extra cost.

"It is clearly obvious who should pay for the overtime involved," Lichtman said.

The trustee commented that public construction projects seem to be subject to the whims of contractors, often upsetting whole school districts.

Trustee Aldo Vagnozzi, who supported the legal action against the contractor, said the district made a mistake by extending the time limit in the first place.

"We made our mistake when we extended our completion date from May 1 to July 1. Any extension is an invitation to use up the whole period," Vagnozzi commented, adding that he voted against the extension.

PRISK said the district is making plans to house the students elsewhere.

"I don't believe we will get into Harrison," he said.

The board decided to take action against the architect of the school for what trustees described as a design error.

Lichtman again spearheaded the move, calling for withholding more than \$2,600 from the architect's payment.

Stultz opened the matter when he recommended the

board approve additional bracing for the stairwells of the building. The stairwells are three-story shafts with the stairs lined by rods extending from ceiling to floor.

Stultz said the stairway balustrade could be made to vibrate, and although the stairwells is still safer than a normal railing, it could be dangerous.

Lichtman criticized the architect, Ralph Hamill-Recker, for not foreseeing the problem.

He said other situations also have shown that architects and contractors make mistakes so that "subsequently, we wind up paying more."

Vagnozzi again supported the move, saying the district should carefully consider every expenditure for construction.

"I think the word is going to get around that the Farmington School Board does not rubber stamp everything that comes to us," Vagnozzi said.

STULTZ DEFENDED the architect, although noted the firm could have been at fault.

"I have yet to see any construction project of one-tenth this magnitude that didn't have a multitude of change orders," he said.

Other building projects also caused lively discussion among the school officials.

Vagnozzi objected to a contingency allowance of \$2,000 for four parking lot paving projects. The lots at Alameda and Woodale Elementary, O.E. Dunkel Junior High and the Administration Building are being blacktopped at an estimated contract price of just over \$22,000.

Stultz requested the extra money, still under the \$26,400

budgeted, because of problems in the administration building lot and at the two elementary schools. The Dunkel project cost less than expected.

Vagnozzi said the extra money is about 10% of the total contract. Vagnozzi said he suspected contractors deliberately underbid to get jobs and then ask for more money.

However, the board approved the expenditure after learning work on the lots would stop unless additional funds were available.

Schools Set Tax At 21.5 Mills

FARMINGTON
The Farmington Board of Education set its property tax rate for operations for the 1970-71 fiscal year at 21.5 mills (\$21.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation).

Business Manager William Prisk noted trustees previously had decided on the rate for operations and that the deadline for formal approval is Sept. 1.

PRISK ADDED that the 21.5 mills is one-half mill less than approved by district voters.

Only one-half of a full mill voted for the operation of pools and auditoriums will be used again this year.

Total school levy will be 35.93 in the City of Farmington and Farmington Township and 35.73 in West Bloomfield Township. The levies amount to \$35.93 per \$1,000 assessed valuation and \$35.73 per \$1,000 assessed valuation respectively.

The total levy comes from 8.23 mills for operations approved by the Oakland County Tax Allocation Board plus two-tenths in all but West Bloomfield Township.

The remainder of the total comes from voted increase for operations, 21.5 mills, and six mills for debt retirement.

TRUSTEE ALDO VAGNOZZI was the only board

member voting against the operations levy.

He said the board should have had some kind of public hearing on the levy before approving it.

"We haven't been able to have a public hearing on the budget before setting the tax levy because of delays by the Legislature," Vagnozzi said.

He added: "I would feel a lot better if we heard from people—where they thought we need reductions and where we need more."

The trustee also noted that earlier this year the school board reduced the mill levy for debt retirement from seven mills to six.

Also earlier in the year, he added, Oakland County and Farmington Township sent letters to the school board asking the district to give property tax relief to residents.

Vagnozzi cited the lowering of the debt retirement levy and questioned if the other governments had lowered their tax rates.

Farmington Calendar

VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I

Aug. 13. Farmington Barracks 1152, Veterans of World War I, will hold its monthly meeting in the American Legion Hall, Lakeway at Grand River, Farmington. Coffee and cake will be served at 1 p.m. followed by the business meeting at 2 p.m. Regular meetings are held the second Thursday of each month and all World War I veterans are invited to attend.

SENIOR CITIZENS SOCIAL CLUB

Aug. 14. The Senior Citizens Social Club will meet at noon in the First United Methodist Church social room. Bring a sandwich. A social afternoon with cards will follow the business meeting.

ART SHOW AND SALE

Aug. 14-15. An art show and sale by scholarship-winning high school students will be held from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Teepees Barn, 30155 14 Mile between Middle Belt and Northwestern.

POLICE AUCTION

Aug. 15. Beginning at 10 a.m., the annual police auction conducted by the City of Farmington Public Safety Dept. will be held at city hall. About 30 bikes will be available for bid plus an assortment of miscellaneous items.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL REGISTRATION

Aug. 15. Registration for this fall's junior football program will be held at Farmington and North Farmington High Schools. The program is for boys 9 to 12 years of age. Boys living south of I-696 should register at Farmington High; those living north of the expressway should register at North Farmington High.

Speed's Bad

Pep pills can affect the brain, according to Michigan State University pharmacologist Laurence A. Carr. The pills have been found to increase the amount of chemical released from nerve endings in live animal brains.

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Girl Bitten; Dog Sought

Deborah Cummins, 10, will have her first rabies shot today and must have 20 more unless the dog which bit her Monday is found.

Deborah was bitten in the front yard of her home at 28008 New Bedford Drive Monday afternoon by a large, grey dog. The dog had a license tag and was about the size of a Doberman pinscher or Weimaraner.

If the dog can be located and checked for rabies, Deborah won't have to have the other 20 shots, according to the family doctor. Anyone with information should contact Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cummins at 851-0340.

Honor Student

Miss Suzanne Fell of 2121 Oxford in Farmington is one of 37 Western Michigan University students who will graduate with honors Aug. 14.

Miss Fell earned cum laude honors from the Kalamazoo University, one of 34 to be named among 2,550 degree recipients.

A highlight of the WMU ceremony will be presentation of honorary Doctor of Science degrees to Apollo 13 astronauts James A. Lovell Jr., John Swigert and Fred W. Haise.

Shoo Musk Oxen

Oxen landing at Greenland are occasionally delayed while airport ground crews chase 900-pound musk oxen away.

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