

County Budget To Cut Road Patrol

Wayne County's Board of Commissioners has adopted a \$196 million budget which generally holds the line on spending and calls for a gradual phasing out of free local patrol services by the county sheriff. Plymouth Township would be affected.

The record budget approved at the board's Oct. 29 meeting by a 21-4 vote, is \$29.9 million higher than this year's outlays of \$166.2 million. However, \$27.9 million of the increase is earmarked for welfare grants and will be reimbursed by the state.

The major budgeting decision made by the commissioners was a directive that the Sheriff reorganize his Road

Patrol and Investigation Division to emphasize centralized police services and gradually phase out free local patrol activities in the townships.

Townships would still be eligible for local patrol service by the Sheriff, but would be expected to pay for it. No deadline was set for the phase-out. However, the Board of Commissioners requested Sheriff William Lucas to submit a proposed reorganization plan for the Patrol and Investigation Division by Dec. 1, the start of the county fiscal year.

THE SHERIFF requested a \$1.5 million increase over this year's \$2 million budget for the Road Patrol and Investigation Division to boost the division's manpower from 127 to 212.

The County Board of Auditors recommended a budget of \$2,065,000 for the division—a \$38,029 increase, but a net cut of six patrolmen. The commissioners accepted the auditors' recommendation.

The auditors based their recommendation on the fact that Romulus Township incorporated as a city during the year and, therefore, under long standing policy, routine patrol service in Romulus would be discontinued. Nine patrolmen had been working in Romulus which also has its own police force.

Sheriff Lucas is expected to appear before the commissioners' Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee Nov. 9 to argue for his original budget request, which included \$470,000 for continuation and expansion of the "Metro Squad," an undercover narcotics unit established this year. The meeting is set for 10 a.m. at the City-County Building.

INSTEAD OF earmarking money specifically for the Metro Squad, the Board of Commissioners directed that the Sheriff reorganize the division, known informally as the Road Patrol, in order to continue the Metro Squad. The board resolution states that the reorganization plan should:

• Recognize "the established policy of the County of

Wayne for a gradual phasing out of Road Patrol services provided to local units of government"—a policy adopted by the County Board on Oct. 25, 1963.

• Provide "capability for continuing activities presently being performed by the existing personnel referred to as the Metro Squad."

The resolution also directed that: "Those communities presently receiving local patrol services from the sheriff be advised of these proposals towards the objective of said communities immediately developing plans for the financing of such local police protection as they deem advisable."

EIGHT TOWNSHIPS were identified as the major recipients of Sheriff's patrol service in a recent study by the National Association of Chiefs of Police and the Citizens Research Council of Michigan. They were Brownstown, Canton, Northville, Plymouth, Romulus (since incorporated), Sumpter, Huron and Van Buren.

In recommending a hold-the-line budget for the Road Patrol, the Board of Auditors noted that the study recommendations presently are being considered by the Board of Commissioners.

The study concluded that townships, in particular, should pay more of the cost if they want the sheriff to continue to provide local police service for them. It stated that "most unincorporated areas pay very little for police service even though they have a relatively greater ability to pay than many of the incorporated areas that must pay both for their own police services and for the services in unincorporated areas."

The study recommended reorganization and upgrading of the Road Patrol, stating that the department "as presently organized and operated does not provide a suitable vehicle for the provision of police services in the county."

During floor debate, several commissioners pointed out that the sheriff's budget can be adjusted during the year if changes are warranted.

The county budget adopted by the Board of Commissioners is only \$340,000 higher than the total recommended by the Board of Auditors, a reflection of the fact that it is one of the tightest budgets in recent years.

IN OTHER major budget actions, the board:

• Shelved a citizens commission's recommendations for salary hikes for most elected county officials, declaring that the \$536,750 needed to grant the raises was not available. The increases recommended were \$10,000 for judges, \$5,000 for most elected offices and \$2,000 for county commissioners.

• Earmarked \$1.5 million for acquisition of additional facilities for housing prisoners in order to relieve overcrowding at the County Jail. A number of possible sites are being explored.

• Cut the Port Commission budget from \$127,185 to \$34,000—a move resulting from a proposal that the commission contract with the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce for staff services.

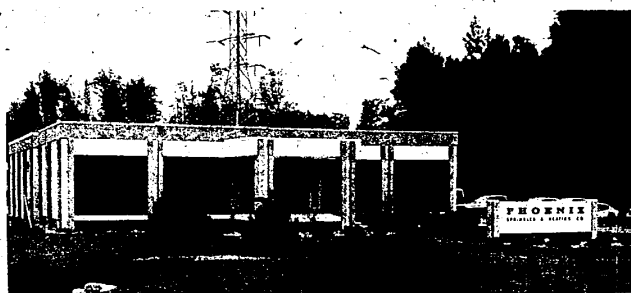
• Took \$1 million from a tuberculosis treatment account in

anticipation of a like decrease in the cost of TB care and earmarked the money to meet higher payroll costs which are expected to result from current union contract negotiations.

Earmarked \$137,500 for the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, with \$87,500 of it "to be expended only upon specific authorization by the Board of Commissioners after review as to contributions requested and received from other units of government."

Added one hearing referee and supporting staff to Juvenile Court at a cost of \$41,575 and increased the Child Development Center budget by \$75,000 in response to a strong plea for more psychologists.

Increased by \$2 the present \$17.50 weekly payment for foster home care of wards of Juvenile Court. The board stipulated that the increase be passed on to the foster parents by the agencies involved.



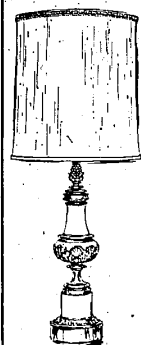
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