

Compensation head defends raises

By Pat Murphy
Staff writer

Pay raises for lawmakers and other state officials may have been denounced and rejected, but they were justified, according to the Oakland County lawyer who was chairman of committee recommending the salary increases.

Burton H. Schwartz, chairman of the State Officers' Compensation Commission (SOCC), said lawmakers should have voted yes on the pay hikes — because they deserved them — but then voted to turn the \$9,187 (over two years) increases back to the state general fund.

'Today's vote was the only proper action in light of the significant budget deficit plaguing Michigan.'

— Rep. Jan C. Dolan
R-Farmington Hills

"That way legislators would have stood up for principle," Schwartz said, "without hurting the state budget."

Schwartz, who lives in West

Bloomfield and practices law in Farmington Hills, made his comments Thursday, a short time after the Michigan House of Representatives turned down their proposed 16 percent pay hike, 102 to 3, according to unofficial tallies. All Oakland County representatives voted against the proposed pay hike.

ONE WEEK EARLIER state senators rejected the pay hike 34 to 9. Oakland County senators voted against the increase, except for Sen. Jack Faxon, who was absent and did not vote.

Commission (SOCC). The Senate passed the way a week earlier by passing the resolution 34-0 with three abstentions and one absent.

Jacobetti was denied a chance to make a 40-minute speech in favor of the pay raise.

Dolan and several Democratic leaders wanted to accept the pay hikes without taking a vote but were embarrassed into turning it down when House minority leader Paul Hildgraves, R-Holland, turned it into a political issue.

If a two-thirds majority of both chambers hadn't rejected the increase, lawmakers would have seen their current \$45,540 salaries go to \$47,288 on Oct. 1 and to \$52,800 in 1992.

The governor's salary would have risen 12.9 percent to \$120,500. Supreme Court justices would have been raised 12.5 percent to \$120,000, and 600 appeals and trial court judges would have received automatically the same percentage increase.

able layoffs.

"Today's vote was the only proper action in light of the significant budget deficit plaguing Michigan," said Rep. Jan C. Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, who had praise for the legislators of voters who contacted thousands about the proposed pay hikes.

"It is reassuring to see citizens take an active role in government," she said. "This clearly illustrates that people can have a positive impact on the legislative process."

Freshman State Rep. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham, said rejecting the pay hike was a matter of "leading by example."

"I couldn't accept a pay hike when we were cutting back in so many other areas," said Bouchard, who co-sponsored a resolution against the pay hikes.

THE OUTPOURING of rejection and resentment didn't bother Schwartz. "We made the best judgment based on information we had. Lawmakers, governors, the supreme court justices and state judges (60%) all deserve raises."

Rejection of the increases will freeze salaries and save taxpayers about \$10 million over two years.

County host fee paves way to expand landfill

By Pat Murphy
Staff writer

A major obstacle blocking the county's solid waste program has been removed with an out-of-court agreement calling for Oakland to pay Orion Township a \$7 million host fee to accommodate an expanded landfill.

But Oakland County Commissioner Thomas A. Law objected to the amount of the host fee saying, "We're going to break this county financially with host fees."

The agreement approved Thursday by county and township officials, calls for Oakland to pay \$7 million in exchange for Orion's dropping its 1990 law suit against plans to expand the Eagle Valley Landfill from 28 to 100 acres.

The agreement must also be approved by the Oakland Circuit Court, possibly this week.

The landfill will be owned and operated by Waste Management Inc. as the local recycling plant's trash that can not be recycled is processed in other part of the county's \$600 million waste project.

THE \$7 MILLION was included as a host fee to pay for expenses related to roads, environmental safeguards and other needed improvements. The township will receive a percentage of the more than \$5 million extra funds the expanded landfill will bring.

The agreement was approved 21 to 4. Commissioners Keith L. Janssen, R-Bly, and Charles E. Lathrop, R-Cadillac, were absent. Voting against the measure were commissioners Law, R-Bloomfield Hills, and Democrats, Teresa Kagan, Troy; Paul E. M. Ferguson, Grand Park; and Rudy Sierra, Ferndale.

Law said the landfill is important to the county's solid waste plan. But he insists the host fee should be considerably less. "That landfill was already in place," he said. "So streets were already in place. It should have been about \$2 million."

Law said he is also concerned about setting an expensive precedent. "Every time the county has to build something, the community is going to demand a host fee."

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR JoAnn VanTassel said the host fee will be used to pave and upgrade parts of Giddings, Walton and Silver Hill roads and to extend water and sewer service.

Commissioner Marilyn E. Goshgoshian, R-Bloomfield Hills, seemed to summarize the feelings of many of her colleagues in explaining why she voted in favor of the agreement. "It's a vital part of our waste system" — with or without the intervention of Auburn Hills.

"We're referring to the proposed waste-to-energy incinerator proposed for Auburn Hills, the most controversial part of the solid waste plan that will not be built until the end of 1990 at the earliest."

The landfill is considered crucial to the solid waste plan, according to Roger J. Smith, county deputy director of public works. The county plan to begin recycling — or processing — the waste to energy incinerator in Auburn Hills is "not that far off," he said.

If the proposed incinerator, the recycling part of the solid waste plan, had begun in November 1987, Smith said, "This date is subject to change because, depending on the results of lawsuits against the county plan itself or the bonds issued to finance it."

Thumbs down

State House rejects pay hikes

The Michigan House of Representatives has turned down a controversial 16 percent over-two-years pay increase.

But Speaker Lewis Dodak, D-Birmingham, kept Thursday's results unofficial by taking an unrecorded vote.

"There was a two-thirds vote to reject," the House journal clerk reported.

Other lawmakers said three Democrats voted no. Dominic Jacobetti of Negaunee, chair of the Appropriations Committee, and Joe Young Sr. and Jr., both of Detroit.

With 110 votes flashing on the roll call board, there was no way to record accurately which members were absent or abstained, the equivalent of voting no. William Keith, D-Garden City, missed the vote.

It took the House only about two minutes to adopt a Senate resolution rejecting pay increases proposed by the State Officers' Compensation

OCC grants scholarships

Oakland Community College has awarded scholarships to 27 students for the winter semester. Five went to area students.

Demetra Kazanis of Birmingham and Shannon Klement of Troy received Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Scholarships.

Other area students and the scholarships they received are: Michael Kozlowski, Farmington Hills, an Orchard Ridge Scholarship; Marguerite Hanselman, Lathrup Village, a Highland Lakes Scholarship; and Karen Azar, Southfield, a Southeast Campus Scholarship.

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