

Finance director ruffling feathers as he addresses budget overruns

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

As Oakland County's new director of management and budget sees it, plucking a chicken means ruffling a few feathers.

But that doesn't necessarily win friends, at least not at first.

As a matter of fact, Robert J. Daddow, appointed to the county's top financial post by Executive L. Brooks Patterson — and his approach to the job is starting to irritate a few county commissioners.

"He's the David Stockman of Oakland County," said Commissioner Ruel E. McPherson, D-Hazel Park, referring to President Reagan's budget director with the abrasive personality and, according to many, questionable policies.

McPherson questioned Daddow's approach to the job during a Democratic caucus Thursday, prior to the regular meeting of the county board of commissioners.

McPherson said Daddow was off base when, at a meeting of the General Government committee, he was critical of commissioner Dennis M. Aaron, D-Oak Park.

In reported remarks, Daddow said he'd been able to trim \$600,000 from the county's Medical Care Facility in a few months, while Aaron, as a commissioner for more than 20 years, had not been able to affect similar budget-cutting measures.

"Where's he been all this time?" Daddow asked of Aaron. McPherson said Daddow's remarks about Aaron should have been made in private, if at all. "Who does he think he is? Dennis Aaron has been holding the line on the budget for 20 years. He (Daddow) is on board for a few months and think he has all the answers."

Commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick of Southfield, chairman of The Democratic Caucus, said he appreciates the job Daddow is trying to do. "But there are some problems."

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Commissioner Larry Crake, R-Waterford and chairman of the

■ 'When he (Daddow) was in the private sector, he could tell people what to do. In government that approach won't necessarily work. You've got to convince people, not order them around.'

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board, seemed to agree, although he generally approves of Daddow and the job he's doing. "I have a great respect for his (Daddow's) ability. But he's not politically astute. But we're trying to work on that."

No action was taken. Crake said, however, Daddow could benefit from some political savvy that will enable him to understand government and politics better.

In private conversations, for example, Daddow said he was going to bring a business approach to

government, "or he'd take his ball and go home," Crake said.

"He (Daddow) doesn't understand. We own the ball. He may go home, but the ball stays here."

Daddow, who lives in Rochester, was vice president of the Public Sector Group of Gordon and Company, which specializes in audits and consulting projects. An accountant by training, he has an undergraduate and a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

Asked about criticism that might not be politically astute, Daddow said the current budget crisis requires straight and, at times, critical discussion.

Officials, including commissioners, may get offended in the process, he said, but it couldn't be helped.

Aaron, Pernick, McPherson are other Democrats who have repeatedly accused Republicans of hypocrisy in their approach to government.

Democrats, currently outnumbered 18 to 7, have been in the minority for at least a decade. Thus any budget overruns are attributable to them.

OU research refutes cult stereotypes

Allegations made this spring by U.S. media that the Montana-based Church Universal and Triumphant is "the next Waco waiting to happen" are false, two Oakland University researchers claim.

The possession of weapons does not constitute a community threat, according to psychologist Larry Lilliston and sociologist Gary Shepherd, following on-site observations made in July. They also refute international charges of child abuse brought against members of a second religious movement called The Family (formerly known as The Children of God).

Family member homes have been raided by authorities in several countries, on the basis of trumped-up charges, and children have been forcibly taken away from their parents. All of these charges have subsequently been dismissed and the children returned.

However, just this spring, 90 children were removed from their homes in France, and most still remain in government custody. Several California homes have also been recently harassed by detractors and professional "cult hunters."

Lilliston and Shepherd were

among a dozen scholars from universities all over the country who were given unprecedented access to study the Church Universal and Triumphant.

Lilliston and Shepherd spent three weeks at the church headquarters in Montana (longest of any of the research team), living with members, observing social practices, conducting interviews, etc. They were also the only team members who went on to spend a week living with members of The Family in California, where they conducted similar observations, testing of children, etc.

Lilliston earned a doctorate

from Temple University and is currently chairman of the psychology department at Oakland University. He has conducted a number of previous studies of new religious movements with a particular emphasis on socialization of Hare Krishna children.

Shepherd was awarded his doctorate from Michigan State University and has also carried out much previous research on contemporary religious movements, particularly Mormonism.

The recent tragedy in Waco, Texas, and the subsequent wave of public "cult" hysteria gave special impetus to their studies.

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