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Another issue the new contract address is medical benefits. The new contract will change medical coverage from traditional Blue Cross/Blue Shield to the company's PPO, as a measure to control costs.

"This won't decrease our medical premiums," Costick said. "It will just keep them from going up."

One area in which the new contract helps workers is for retirements.

The multiplier factor was raised from 2.25 to 2.5. That means that an employee with 20 years of service would receive 50 percent of his or her pay for retirement instead of 45 percent.

"The pension was the big issue for us," said L. Dick Murphy, president of the local POLC chapter. "We got a significant increase."

Some changes in the health insurance plan, such as increased co-pays, from 10 to 20 percent, were part of the new contract, but the city increased its contribution for medical premiums, Murphy said. In addition, although workers will be switched to the PPO during their working years, they will be switched back to the traditional BC/BS insurance on retirement.

"A lot of people retire and move out of state," Murphy said. "This helps."

A POLC member is vested after 15 years, AFSCME workers are vested after eight. The multiplier also goes back to 2.25 if an employee retires after age 67, Murphy said.

"We'd have liked to keep the higher figure after 67, but you can't have everything," he said.

## Team Farmington lauds Bates for boost

Nancy Bates, in her last Farmington Hills City Council meeting as mayor, was honored by Team Farmington, the local affiliate of Special Olympics, for the boost she gave the group.

"We've been trying for a couple of years to get recognition," said Coach Todd Lipa, who attended the Dec. 20 meeting with several Team Farmington members. "But it wasn't until you became mayor that we really became recognized."

After a 14-minute videotape was played of activities promoted by Bates involving Team Farmington, including the Farmington Hills Family Day in the Park, a

July event coinciding with the celebration of the city's 20th anniversary.

"This has been a special year," he said. "And we couldn't have done it without you."

Lipa and team members presented Bates with a plaque. Bates, in turn, pinned a Farmington Hills "ambassador's medal" on Lipa, and credited him with bringing distinction to the city through Special Olympics events and programs.

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