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Why Spreen Wants Own Legal Adviser

By JAN WILLIAMS
PONTIAC

The question foremost in the minds of the Oakland County Sheriff's Dept. these days is whether it will get a full-time legal adviser.

But it isn't foremost in the mind of the Board of Commissioners personnel practices committee from which a final approval must come.

According to Committee Chairman Mary Dearborn (R-Birmingham), Sheriff Johannes Spreen's request for a full-time legal adviser isn't being discussed by the committee at this time.

"The Sheriff's Dept. signed a contract with the Pontiac Police Dept. to share the services of a legal adviser hired by the prosecutor's office," Mrs. Dearborn said. "That contract doesn't expire until July. So we'll deal with that problem when the time comes."

George Geddis, present legal adviser for the two depts., will be leaving this month to become a full-time assistant prosecutor. There are no plans to replace him yet.

The Sheriff's Dept. had requested a full-time legal adviser on its list of additional positions to be granted them in the 1973 budget.

The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the list at its April 10 meeting, but the position of legal adviser had been deleted by the personnel practices committee.

Commissioner Bernard Counties Lose If Gas Tax Is Suspended

Oakland County will lose approximately \$2.37 million and Wayne County will lose \$4.6 million if the two cent gas tax increase is suspended, according to figures compiled by the County Road Association of Michigan.

"Rural counties will be the heaviest losers according to the group. A citizens petition drive was initiated to suspend the tax until it can be voted on by Michigan residents.

The road officials said Oakland would get \$14.6 million with the increase and \$12.3 million without it. Oakland received \$10.6 million last year.

Wayne County will get \$39.77 million with the tax increase and \$24.2 million without it. Last year Wayne County received \$23.97 million.

Audubon Club Meets May 9
BLOOMFIELD HILLS
Bruce Radabagh will be guest speaker at the May 9 meeting of the Oakland Audubon Society. The meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. in Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Telegraph and Lone Pine.

Lennon (D-Ferdale) questioned the deletion, and Mrs. Dearborn explained that the Sheriff's Dept. has access to a part-time legal adviser from the prosecutor's office.

Lennon, however, said the Sheriff's Dept. needed a full-time legal adviser "with all the new procedures and technicalities involved in law enforcement now."

According to Undersheriff Leo Hazen, a legal adviser has the responsibilities of advising local units and the Sheriff's Dept. as to proper arrest procedures, doing legal research for the police, giving legal advice when complaints are directed against, and acting as a liaison between the officers and the prosecuting attorney's office.

Sheriff Spreen says he is happy about the deletion: "We have an urgent need for a full-time legal adviser for a department that wants to move into the future to provide better service for the citizens of this county."

Spreen says he and Pontiac Police Chief William Hanger agree each needs a full-time legal adviser.

"The prosecuting attorney was allowed to present his views before the committee, and I feel that I should have the same opportunity."

Commissioner Henry Hoot (R-Troy) stated at the April 10 meeting that the personnel practices committee had met with the prosecutor who had stated that any legal advice should come from the prosecutor's office. There wasn't any such meeting with the sheriff.

Oakland County Prosecuting Attorney L. Brooks Patterson says he has no objections to the Sheriff Dept.'s request.

"I don't want a layer of lawyers between me and the Sheriff's Dept.," Patterson said. "But if the department wants its own legal adviser, it's fine with me as long as it doesn't affect my ability to prosecute."

When questioned whether the legal adviser should be hired by the prosecutor's office or the Sheriff's Dept.,

Patterson said he didn't care who hired him.

"But anything involving the actual prosecution of a case should come from this office, and the Sheriff Dept.'s legal adviser shouldn't be involved."

Patterson says this would include such things as requesting warrants, taking statements and arresting procedures. He listed the duties that would come under a legal adviser's jurisdiction as civil liberties and enforcement of grooming guidelines among officers.

Commissioner Lennon had planned to present a resolution to the commission on behalf of the Sheriff's Dept., asking for a full-time legal adviser.

Lennon, however, says he has recently discussed the matter with Sheriff Spreen and they're presently working on the possibility of hiring a legal adviser through the civil counsel.


"In this way, he would be a merit system employee, under the direct supervision of the county's commission," Lennon said.

The civil counsel is a separate entity made up of the legal staff of Oakland County government.

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