

Legislature votes to hire affirmative action head



Leonard Cooke... warned of lawsuit

By KEVIN MCCOY
Staff Writer

The County Legislature Tuesday night voted to seek a full-time coordinator to implement an affirmative action plan for hiring and promotions that has been stalled for almost two years.

Approval of the measure by a 17-1 vote came after a parade of 15 speakers from the NAACP and various minority groups voiced support for hiring a coordinator and hinted at the possibility of a lawsuit if the affirmative action plan was not met.

Legislator Diane Bejean, R-Orangetown, voted

against the measure, contending that there was no evidence of discrimination against minorities by the county.

With the passage of the proposal, the Legislature's Budget and Finance Committee will assemble a search committee to screen candidates for the position. Formation of the group is expected to be discussed at the committee's regular meeting Thursday night.

An approved during the regular Legislature session in New City, the measure authorizing hiring of a coordinator calls for continuing \$8,000 from the county and \$12,000 in federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) money to fund the position.

One brought on board, the coordinator is expected to monitor hiring and promotions in all county departments to guard against discrimination against minorities.

The stalled affirmative action plan, which was adopted by the Legislature in October, 1978, found that such discrimination apparently exists. Only one of 46 county employees earning more than \$25,000 a year was black, the study showed. It also pointed out that only six of 125 workers earning more than \$15,000 and 18-

000 a year or 16.6 percent of the county work force were black.

Blacks are well represented in the work force comprising 14 percent of the total 2,100 county work force compared to about 5.7 percent representation in Rockland's total population, according to the study. But the report showed that low blacks or other minorities hold high responsibility white collar jobs.

As one of its conclusions, the report called for hiring of a coordinator to correct the perceived inequities.

Elise Wall, a former member of the now-defunct county Citizens' Affirmative Action Advisory Commit-

tee, called the under representation of minorities in county jobs a "time bomb waiting to go off," and pressed for implementation of the plan.

She said the county would stand to lose the more than \$10 million Rockland receives each year in federal funding if the affirmative action goals were not met.

Leonard Cooke, a former chairman of the county Human Rights Commission, called on the Legislature to "pay attention" to inequities in hiring minorities and warned of a lawsuit aimed at cutting off the county's federal funding.

"If there is any possible

way a federal lawsuit can be brought to bring you to attention and force you to pay attention I'll be the one to bring it," he said.

Bejean, however, termed the claims of inequity in county hiring and promotion of minorities "specious" and called for reevaluation of the entire affirmative action plan. She pointed to the statistics showing the number of blacks in the county work force as compared to the total black population in Rockland as proof of her claim.

"I challenge anyone to show that minorities are being discriminated against. I suggest that there is no evidence," she said.

County opposes federal nuke transport rules

The County Legislature has gone on record in opposition to proposed federal regulations that would allow the transportation of radioactive nuclear material through populated areas.

By a 14-0 vote with two abstentions, the Legislature called on the federal government to abide by a local law passed in January requiring shippers of radioactive material to obtain a permit before transporting their cargo over Rockland roads.

The federal Department of Transportation is expected to propose a number of "revised" routes for the transportation of nuclear waste in an effort to circumvent the Rockland law and similar ordinances enacted by other municipalities.

The routes would reportedly ignore local prohibitions and seek the "safest way" to transport nuclear material.

John Kessler, head of Rockland Citizens for Safe Energy, plans to vote the organization's opposition to the federal proposal at a June 11 hearing in Manhattan. He warned that Rockland could become a prime route for the transportation of nuclear waste if the federal government approves a proposed dumping site near Buffalo.

After a meeting of the Legislature's Multi-Purpose Committee Monday night, he said full legislative opposition to the federal plan would add greater clout to the call for banning local restrictions on transport of nuclear waste.

—KEVIN MCCOY

Rockland school transport aid OK'd

ALBANY — It took almost two months for the state Senate to approve \$25,000 in transportation aid owed Rockland a right school districts. Now the Assembly has only a matter of days to do likewise.

A bill restoring the funds lost when administrative and clerical problems delayed filing of the necessary application by the county Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) finally passed the Senate Tuesday.

Only two committees had been cleared since the matter came to the attention of state legislators in February, and the Senate bill sponsored by Linda Wainko, D-Spring Valley, was passed by daily on that body's official calendar.

Mugging victim left injured

Police are investigating the mugging of a Haverstraw village resident that took place Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. on West Street in the village.

Haverstraw Village police said they are seeking a 4-foot male in his mid-20s who was wearing a blue

shirt and blue jeans or dark slacks.

Police said he pushed the male resident to the ground and took his wallet and fled on foot. No money was in the wallet, police said, and no injuries were reported.

Police are withholding identification of the victim during the investigation.

Brian Smith pleads innocent

Brian Smith, a suspended East Ramapo teacher who also works as Brian the Magic Clown, has pleaded not guilty to charges of possessing and selling drugs.

Smith, 22, entered the plea in County Court, New City, in an indictment charging him with possessing cocaine and marijuana and with selling the narcot-

ics at his Spring Valley home to undercover police on four occasions from April 21 to May 4 for a total of \$2,740.

He is free on \$5,000 bail. A tentative trial date of July 21 has been set in the case.

Smith moonlights at children's parties and charities as a clown who performs magic tricks.

Commuters dispute need for fare hike

NEW YORK (UPI) — Commuters, transit workers and politicians Monday took turns disputing the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's need for a proposed fare hike of as much as 25 cents.

They appeared at the first of three public hearings held by the MTA board of directors on a fare hike that could take effect on buses and subways as early as July 1. The hike could be as much as 25 cents while commuter railroad fares could increase up to 30 percent.

The hearing at the Hilltop Hotel was disrupted for 10 minutes when 25 people marched around the room waving picket signs and shouting. "No racist fare increases!" Some of the demonstrators, who were ejected by police, were "Dennis Koch" buttons

MTA Chairman Richard Ravitch said the fares must rise unless state legislators authorize new taxes to pay the authority's \$388.8 million deficit for the current fiscal year.

Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson, R-Binghams, last week said he would call for legislative adjustment without considering an MTA tax package.

John Simpson, MTA executive director, blamed the need for a fare increase on spiraling fuel costs, a recent pay increase for transit workers and maintenance of deteriorating equipment.

Simpson said a final decision on a fare hike will not be made before the end of June.

The Brian Keitman, an engineer who is vice president of Citizens for Clean Air, said he doubted that higher fares would mean better service.

"It is going to increase traffic congestion and pollute our air more," Keitman said. "It will give us nothing in return — only the same shabby, inadequate service we've put up with for years."

The MTA's subsidiary agencies include the city Transit Authority, the Trolleybus Bridge and Tunnel Authority, the Long Island Rail Road and the Harlem, Hudson and New Haven divisions of Conrail.

Among the politicians at the hearing were Reps. Ted Weiss and Elizabeth Holtzman, both D-N.Y., as well as Howard Goldfarb and Andrew Stein, former presidents of Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Police rest case in 'Sam' leak

NEW YORK (AP) — The Police Department has rested its case against a detective it says gave confidential information to a freelance writer about possible accomplices in the Son of Sam murders.

Presentation of evidence against detective Henry Cimotti was concluded Tuesday in the departmental hearing that could lead to the dismissal of the 17-year veteran of the force.

Cimotti's defense will begin Friday after Arnold Krass, deputy commissioner of traffic rules in a motion to dismiss several of the more charges. Motions for dismissal on five of the

counts were previously announced.

Information developed by Cimotti was considered serious enough when it surfaced last year that the department conducted an ultra-secret probe into whether Son of Sam killer David Berkowitz had accomplices.

But, the department now says, the information proved to be sketchy, unfounded or given by sources of questionable credibility.

The Berkowitz case is closed, Berkowitz had no helper, Deputy Chief Edwin T. Dreher said May 18, when the hearings began.

"I won't change that opinion, I don't think the department is going to do anything," Charles Simpson, Cimotti's attorney, alleged during Tuesday's session of the hearing that has stented was the victim of a cover-up attempt.

"My client is here solely for trying to do his job which if he was allowed to do, might have been damaging to the department," he said.

All but occasionally agreed the fare hike and suggested that funds for construction of the Westway highway be used to offset the deficit instead.

"Everything being done to hold down fares 'is very obvious,'" he said. "My client is not a part of it. My client has approved this case of a fare increase as a far gone conclusion."

An elderly woman commuter asked the board members to keep the present fares.

"It's not fair, I tell you," said Rose Trump of Brooklyn. "My subway gets more and more crumpled all the time. Why should I pay extra?"

Henry Lewis, chairman of 1,000 commuters belonging to the Transport Workers Union, disputed the MTA's claim that the union's April strike is part of the reason a fare hike is needed.

Other public hearings are scheduled for Tuesday in White Plains and Wednesday in Minerva.

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