

Salary Report

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told the board that her group has gotten 316 more signatures protesting the previously reported teacher demands. At the November's school board meeting, the organization presented the school board with a petition containing 960 signatures in support of a one-year wage freeze.

Robert Frey, of Dallas, questioned why the negotiations were held in secret.

Board member John Cleary suggested that after the fact-finder's report was made, the board should consider conducting the negotiations in a more open manner.

"We assumed we would have the fact-finder's report by now," Cleary said.

Possible new soccer fields

The Dallas School District and the Back Mountain Soccer Association are continuing to work together to investigate constructing new soccer fields on vacant land near the Dallas Elementary School and behind the Dallas High School.

Wycallis said that the two areas have been checked with an environmental consultant to make sure they are not considered wetlands.

At the school board meeting, Wycallis said that an official from the federal government is also expected to check the possible fields and give a favorable report this week.

"Hopefully, within the next week, we will have some written informa-

tion," Wycallis said.

The soccer association first proposed constructing the fields to the school board on October 8, with the idea that association would bear the costs of making the fields if the district could ensure that they would have long-term use of them.

Other school board action

The school board issued proclamations congratulating the field hockey team for their runner-up performance in the state championships.

Three cheerleaders, Tami Landon, Wendy Vaughn, and Ginger Williams were also given proclamations congratulating them for qualifying to perform with the All

Stars in London, England, from December 26 to January 2.

The board also gave the Dallas Cheerleading Squad permission to go to Orlando, Fla. to compete in the national cheerleading competition from January 31 to February 4, 1992. The squad will pay its own expenses.

The following student teachers were also approved for the spring semester: From Wilkes University, Jessica Materna and Carrie Walters will student teach English in the High School. From College Misericordia, Mary E. Long, Carolyn Hadfield, and Kim Socash, will student teach in grades kindergarten through four.

New Harveys Lake chief gets a baptism by fire

Just as most of the members of the Harveys Lake Fire Company were returning home from a meeting for the election of officers late Monday night, the company was called to a fire.

The blaze, a chimney fire on Nobel Street in the Sandy Bottom section of Harveys Lake, did not turn out to be serious.

A house owned by Joe Delaney of Maxwell Street, Wilkes-Barre, sustained very little smoke and no fire damage, according to assistant fire chief Bill Davis Sr.

None of the people who rented the house were injured. The call for the fire came in at 12:15 a.m. Tuesday, December 10, and was out by 1 a.m., Davis said.

Davis, who has been an assistant fire chief in the company for 23 consecutive years, was elected chief Monday night, to take effect January 1.

First assistant fire chief will be Davis's son, David Davis, and second assistant chief will be Larry West.

Ed Kelly will remain president of the company, and Frank Lutinski vice president. Mike Drobnicki was elected secretary, and John Martinson, treasurer.

Bears

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season with no size or age limits, Vesloski said.

"Bears are naturally very shy animals, not aggressive for their size," commented Game Commission Biologist Lincoln Lang. "Our main problem between bears and people is that increasing suburban development is steadily encroaching on the bears' habitat. The bears don't mind us there; they can adapt to human activities. Since bears are omnivorous (they'll eat just about anything), they find ready food sources in garbage cans, compost piles, bird feeders and gardens. Trapping and relocating a bear merely moves the problem somewhere else."

Lang added that damage to farms and livestock are often wrongly blamed on bears. During a recent incident in Kingston Township, damage attributed to a "killer bear" was probably done by feral (wild or semi-wild) dogs, according to the Game Commission's investigation, Lang said. "Bears are by nature very shy animals; a

bear is less dangerous to humans than a big house dog. Even a female bear with cubs isn't likely to attack a human."

Since bear munchies include stale bread, fruit and kitchen scraps, Lang suggest that residents not leave these items lying around their yards. "We don't want to discourage people from keeping bird feeders, but leaving other snacks around can attract bears, raccoons and other wildlife. Discouraging these visitors by not feeding them will go a long way towards reducing a possible attractive nuisance."

Vesloski explained that the bear has no natural predators in Pennsylvania. The three-day hunting season, usually timed to coincide with the beginning of the bears' hibernation period, helps to thin the population. Since some bears will have already begun to hibernate by the season's opening day, not all bears are affected by the hunt.

Land Sale

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the corner of Machell and Sterling Avenues to the site. The Wilkes-Barre YMCA originally was to be a partner with the hospital, but backed off after deciding to concentrate resources on its downtown facility.

"The agreement of sale went through many many revisions at the request of General Hospital. Each time the school district ceded to those revisions," said Attorney Benjamin Jones III, solicitor for the district. Finally, Jones said that the school board gave the hospital an ultimatum to purchase the property by 5 p.m. December 5.

The hospital informed Jones on that date that the land would not be purchased.

"Sale price was never negotiated," said Jones. "The revisions were to the term of use by the Little League and other organizations. Each time General Hospital seemed to be more concerned by the use of by community organizations. They

wanted to further negotiate the issue. It's my understanding that Wilkes-Barre General was negotiating separately with the organizations."

Larry Lettie, president of Back Mountain Baseball Inc., said that hospital officials had met with the baseball association's attorney to discuss the sale.

"Ten years wasn't long enough for us," said Lettie. "We need the room. We have 900 kids in the program."

While the Little League uses fields throughout the Back Mountain for its 65 teams to practice, Lettie said that all games are played at the fields by the old Dallas school. Back Mountain Baseball has leased the fields three times from the school district for five-year periods for \$1. Lettie said that the association's current lease expires at the end of this month.

"The bottom line was after ten years, we didn't want to go down a dark road," said Lettie. "This hap-

pened to us once before."

"You just don't pick up an organization with 900 kids," added Lettie. "First of all, find a piece of land in the Back Mountain."

Lettie said that the Little League moved its playing fields in the late 1950s from the area around the Back Mountain Shopping Center in Shavertown. Today such a move would cost at least half a million dollars, he said.

Nagy feels that it's unlikely that the district will get another offer as attractive for the school and land. "I don't know where else we are going to get a deal which protects the fields," said Nagy.

In response to the sale cancellation, school board member John Cleary suggested at the board's meeting December 9 that the board adopt a written policy concerning land sales.

"The reason I want a written policy," said Cleary. "I had concerns two or three weeks after the

proposal. We got no written proposal and no deposit."

"I thought it was the best use of the property," said Cleary. "I'm really disappointed."

Lettie though, is glad that the public property is staying public for now.

"I have mixed feelings on it. I hope the hospital comes to the Back Mountain, but I have to be glad it's not there," said Lettie. "The money they'd get from selling that, five years down the road, nobody is going to remember where the money went. But once it's gone, it's gone."

Patricia Finan Waiter, acting administrator for General Hospital since former CEO and president Norman Ledwin resigned from the hospital on November 26, could not be reached for comment Monday, December 9. The hospital's counsel, Attorney John P. Moses did not return phone calls placed to his office.

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