



CANDY STRIPER AWARDS

Award winners at the annual Candy Stripers Award Night in Georgetown hospital received their trophies last week. Winners were from the left: Christa Mayhew, Award of Excellence, Kuren Baker, Progress Award; and Gail Thompson, Award of Service. (Herald photo)

Fee hike issue unresolved after closed-door meeting

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer

A second meeting is to be arranged between representatives of town council and various local sports groups over council's recent decision to increase ice rental rates at the town's three arenas.

A three-hour meeting behind closed doors at the Stewarttown community centre Thursday night failed to resolve the dispute over the proposed rate hike scheduled for implementation in September. Representatives of both council and the sports groups agree, however, that the meeting was productive and informative.

By mutual agreement, the special four-member committee of council which met with the sports groups officials last week convened privately Monday night to formulate a recommendation to either revise the new ice rates schedule or let it stand as proposed.

"There was no dissension," Coun. Booth said.

Bob Hooper, president of the Georgetown Chrysler Raiders intermediate "A" hockey club, speculated that there will "probably be some changes" in next season's proposed ice rate schedule as a result of last week's "very informative" meeting.

Mr. Hooper expressed pleasure that representatives of both the town and the sports groups were able to air their views on the different aspects of the proposed rates and the likely effects they will have upon the arena-using groups and the arenas themselves.

While the ice rates issue dominated the discussion, he said, there was some dialogue on municipal recreation in general and the manner in which the town recreation department meets its mandate.

Mr. Girdwood conceded that council has a problem with its ice rental rates which can be blamed largely upon the fact that there has been no real rate increase in 15 years.

"Now they're trying to play catch-up," he said, "and it's hurting. It's those big increases that get the parents' backs up. I feel very positive about the situation, but I know my group's going to have to buckle down and sweat a little harder, even though I thought they had no more sweat to give. I don't know if we can do it but we're going to try."

Mr. Girdwood said that the meeting's in camera format was generally "a good idea" aimed entirely at protecting the participants from being quoted in the press as saying "things they wished they hadn't said."

The closed-door idea would have proven its worth if "the fur had started to fly and the gloves came off," he said, but as it turned out, the meeting was "orderly" and the press ban largely unnecessary.

Mr. Girdwood admitted that he would have liked to have seen the matter resolved at the meeting, but acknowledged that further discussion is necessary, as well as final council approval.

The sports groups officials learned "some very positive things" from the municipal representatives, Mr. Girdwood said, and accepted the point stressed by Coun. Levy in particular that the town's 1979 budget has already been established and must be financed as planned.

Although "two or three" accusations about poorly arranged spending priorities were discussed, Mr. Girdwood noted, Mr. King maintained that the budget represents a fair allocation of municipal funds.

"I'm still hoping to get a few dollars back, maybe in the form of a municipal grant," he commented. "I know other communities give their hockey groups grants and some are pretty substantial."

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SECOND MEETING

That recommendation will be presented to the sports groups at a second private meeting for which a date has yet to be set. Pending the outcome of that meeting, the recommendation will then be submitted to council for approval.

Coun. Roy Booth, who heads the special committee made up of councillors Ed Wood, Pat Patterson and Harry Levy, declined to comment this week on the possibility that the proposed ice rates schedule may be changed.

"The decision could go either way," he said.

Also attending last week's meeting in Stewarttown were Mayor Pete Pomeroy, clerk-administrator Ken Richardson, recreation director Glen Gray, town treasurer Ray King and recording secretary Cathy Bouskill.

Representatives of all local groups which use the Acton Community Centre, Georgetown Memorial Arena or Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena were invited by letter to attend the meeting. They included officials of Acton and Georgetown hockey clubs, support groups and figure skating clubs.

VERY GOOD

"It was a very good meeting," Coun. Booth said. "Everyone involved had the opportunity to express their views."

Coun. Booth explained that the meeting was held behind closed doors, in accordance with a decision made by the special committee in his absence, "so those who attended could say what was on their mind without having to worry about how it was going to be interpreted in the press."

His observation that the sports officials involved generally favored the "in camera" format of the meeting was confirmed by several representatives contacted by The Herald.

OWN IDEAS

According to Mr. Snow, Mayor Pomeroy asked the sports officials to come up with ideas for methods to help make the arenas at least regain some of their operating deficit. While the current deficit has been estimated at \$165,000, he said, the proposed increase would produce only \$25,000 extra revenue for the town.

Responding to a question from Mr. Snow, Mr. King told those at the meeting that the balance of the deficit could be recovered by levying an additional \$4 in taxes for each tax-paying family in Halton Hills.

Among the challenges made by sports officials of the town's annual budget, Mr. Snow said, was the question of hydro costs for the three arenas. It was noted that the hydro bill for Gordon Alcott Arena is three times as much as those for the other two centres.

The difference is blamed on the fact that Alcott Arena offers summer ice programs, Mr. Snow said, but the fact that the adjacent Alcott tennis courts are lit by mercury vapor lamps powered through the arena must also be considered.

Thus, the town's tennis players are being partially subsidized by groups using the arena. Mr. Snow stressed that the arena-using groups do not begrudge other sports groups the free use of municipal facilities, but those requiring ice facilities are in effect being "victimised" by the town.

Mr. Snow commented that the entire controversy which has erupted over council's ice rate increase could have been avoided if municipal officials had posed the arena deficit problem to the sports groups in the first place. Had that been done, he said, both factions could have reached a mutual agreement on some "nominal increase" for each of several consecutive years.

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Harassment charges heard at inquiry

Witnesses testifying on behalf of the union in the Superior Glove dispute before the Ontario Labor Relations Board alleged a range of anti-union activity on the part of management which included tampering with machines and harassing the families of pro-union employees.

The union's first witness, called at last Thursday's O.L.R.B. hearing, Superior Glove employee Inge Neistroye said that since January 29 until recently her machine had been tampered with regularly. "I had more problems with my machine during that time than I had all my years at the plant," she said.

She said she would "leave in the afternoon and everything would be fine and in the morning the machine wouldn't work."

"I'm not a mechanic, I just know when something's wrong," she said.

Responding to cross-examination questions about the state of her nerves, Neistroye said, "Everybody at the plant was nervous."

Plant owner Frank Geng was alleged to have followed her husband to his place of work in order to convince him to take Mrs. Neistroye away from her work at the plant. Mr. Geng says this was because he was worried about her nerves.

AFRAID FOR JOB

Mrs. Neistroye said she was nervous "because I was afraid for my job. I was involved with the union."

Mrs. Neistroye testified that when she complained about pulling heavy boxes at work because of a back injury the previous year, Mr. Geng had said, "if you go to the doctor one more time you have no business working in the plant."

Mrs. Neistroye said she was called into Mr. Geng's office at the plant, because he knew she was a member of the union. He talked about shifting his business to imports because "everybody would be phased out."

According to Mrs. Neistroye Mr. Geng had offered her time off work "with compensation" because he wanted it to look like I quit my job."

With five other witnesses waiting to testify for the union, union counsel John McNamee decided to call only one other witness because board chairman Arthur Haldner said

that intimidation of union members by management had been established.

According to Mr. Haldner the board considers the office discussions with union members by Mr. Geng to be intimidating regardless of management's intent.

The union's last witness, Enid Dunn, was called by the union because she gave testimony which allegedly linked her layoffs with union activity.

Mrs. Dunn testified that she was called into Mr. Geng's office on February 1. "He said he had a list of nine or ten names of union members and I was included."

COULDN'T AFFORD

According to Mrs. Dunn, Mr. Geng said "he couldn't afford to pay the girls anymore he would have to go 100 per cent to imports and would eventually close the plant if the union got in."

Mrs. Dunn said "after the layoffs nobody wanted to get involved with the union, they were scared of what might happen."

Management's lawyers conducted a brief cross-examination in which they attempted to establish that discussion of moving to imports had occurred separately from the discussion of the union.

The union's witnesses ended a hearing which had taken place, on and off, over a span of three months.

A ruling is expected from the board in two weeks.

Halton Hills Union Gas employees were picketed Monday by members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union who are protesting slow bargaining on their new contract.

The 1,200-member union began staging day-long rotating strikes last Wednesday because no negotiations have been carried on since April 10. Their contract expired Dec. 31. The 176 workers in the Hamilton local who were off the job Monday included those working in the Georgetown, Acton and Milton areas, as well as Oakville, Burlington and the city of Hamilton.

Ross McVea, president of the Hamilton local, says the union is seeking parity with other workers across Canada who are receiving at least \$1.50 per hour more for comparable jobs than Ontario members of the O.C.A.W.I.U.

The union was asking for a 9 per cent increase to take effect when the contract was signed, with further increases of 3 per cent to begin in June and another 3 per cent in September. Since the negotiations have dragged so slowly they will now have to revise their time frame, he says. The company has offered 8 1/2 per cent now and a further 7 per cent next year. Top pay for service maintenance men class 1 is currently \$7.59.

Negotiations are to resume June 11.

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