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MTA aid becoming Mandel-Pascal battle

By KAREN HOSLER
Staff Writer

The issue of a county contribution to the state's mass transit system has developed into a major political battle between Gov. Marvin Mandel and County Executive Robert A. Pascal with the county delegation to the General Assembly caught awkwardly in the middle.

Since Pascal turned down the governor's request for financial help last week, Mandel has launched a subtle campaign to change the executive's mind, capitalizing on the delegation's desire to be involved in the decision.

Part of that campaign involves a continual rephrasing of exactly what the governor is asking for.

Originally, the plan was that Anne Arundel should join Baltimore and Baltimore County in helping with the state's Mass Transit Administration deficits so that the state would be in a better position to finance the Baltimore subway system.

Mandel has since acknowledged that the subway is politically unpopular in Anne Arundel County because it will not serve county residents directly. So, in his meeting with the county delegation the onerous word "subway" has been dropped.

Mandel told the delegation that all he is asking for is a little help with the MTA bus system which does run lines through the northern end of the county. He even appealed to the delegation members to help him get the idea across to the public that as far as Anne Arundel is concerned, he is talking buses not subways.

The governor's campaign also involves thinly-veiled threats that unless the county comes across, those bus lines could disappear and county bus service certainly will not be expanded.

That message was delivered both at the delegation meeting and in milder tones at Mandel's press conference yesterday.

"The bus lines in Anne Arundel County lose \$6,000 a day," Mandel told reporters. "If we expanded those lines we'll lose even more money."

This strategy is aimed

primarily at legislators from the northern county communities whose constituents depend on those buses and it may be working.

Sen. Jerome F. Connell, D-

Pasadena, said yesterday that he and his North County colleagues have requested bus ridership figures from Mandel. "We're not going to make any decision until we see those."

Mandel repeats stand against commuter tax

Gov. Marvin Mandel yesterday reaffirmed his opposition to a bid by Washington officials to impose a special income tax on suburbanites who work in the capital city.

Mandel said he has talked to several congressmen to garner support against the "commuter tax" now being debated in Congress.

Yesterday, Rep. Stewart B. McKinney, R-Conn., urged the adoption of the tax to save Washington from what he said would be ultimate bankruptcy.

For a suburban wage earner making \$14,000 a year, the tax would mean an additional levy of \$112, McKinney said.

In granting the District of Columbia limited self government in 1974, Congress prohibited any city tax upon the earnings of non-residents who worked in the district.

McKinney's proposed 1.5 per cent tax faces strong opposition from suburban Maryland members of Congress, and possibly from other members as well since it would end an exemption from local income taxes enjoyed by congressmen and congressional employees.

"A commuter tax amounts to taxation without representation," said Rep. Herbert E. Harris, D-Va. "That went out with the American Revolution."

"This is a federal city," added Rep. Gilbert Gude, R-Md., whose suburban district takes in Montgomery County. "Citizens all across the country should pay for its operation."

Mayor Walter E. Washington has pegged \$50 million in city

employe pay raises, plus \$6 million in additional subway subsidies to imposition of a commuters tax.

McKinney's bill would start the tax after the first \$6,500 of gross income. It would add \$37.5 million in revenue per year.

The mayor's proposal would yield \$56.6 million in new taxes.

"This city is in very serious financial trouble," McKinney

said, adding that he felt there was little likelihood that Congress would increase the federal payment to the District of Columbia beyond its projected ceiling of \$300 million.

The Senate District Committee, chaired by Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton, D-Mo., has called for a special audit of the city's books following weeks of hearings on the city's finances.

Arbitration set on school board

Board refuses to attend session

Arbitration has been scheduled for the two major disputes between the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County and the county school board, which has refused to participate in one of the proceedings.

Tomorrow, an arbitrator will review TAAAC's request for the 12.9 per cent cost of living increase called for the current year in the union's contract. The school board denied the raise, giving teachers a 6 per cent pay increase.

The board has tried to block tomorrow's arbitration, unsuccessfully seeking a court injunction against it. The board is awaiting a decision on its appeal of the denial, and has refused to attend the session.

On Feb. 12, arbitration will begin over the 31 contested areas of a new contract between the union and the board. Negotiations reached an impasse in December over pay raises, hospitalization, class size and sick leave among

previous year's salaries until such a time as the entire raise could be implemented—approximately halfway through the school year.

The union's strategy was to bring salaries up at the end of the year, giving the union a better bargaining position as it began negotiations for a new contract.

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