Firefighters, policemen get pension relief

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

Firefighters and police officers will no longer have to wait 25 years to retire. That is, if the Baltimore City Council approves a bill Monday intended to allow the workers to retire after serving only 20 years.

The "20 and out" bill, discussed and negotiated for months, goes to the Council June 27 for final approval before the mayor can sign it into law.

Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke and the Council worked closely on amending the bill, which originally would have cost taxpayers "several million dollars," said Third District Councilman Joseph "Jody" T. Landers at Monday's council meeting and second reader on the bill.

Many council members were surprised how cooperative the mayor acted on the "20 and out" bill.

"This is the first time I've gone along with a bill the mayor supported," said Nicholas C. D'Adamo, First District, referring to the previous tensions between the Council and mayor on legislations.

Under the bill's amendments, the public safety providers will no longer have to serve 25 years to receive their pensions, but instead, can retire after 20 years.

They will be able to receive 45 percent of their pensions after 20 years, 47.5 percent after 21 years and 50 percent after 22 years.

"We feel that this is great," said Ed Boston, president of the Baltimore Office of the Fraternal Order of Police. "We spent a lot of time and energy to get this."

Boston said the organization has battled since last August.

"It's not everything we hoped it to be, but it's a real improvement," Boston said Tuesday via telephone.

Other police officers and firefighters agreed.

When the Council took a roll call Monday, and voted 19-0 to keep the bill alive, all of the pension beneficiaries applauded.

"This is a good piece of legislation...," said Timothy D. Murphy, Sixth District, who chairs the Taxation and Finance Committee. Murphy was very instrumental to solving the new pension plan.

The plan will "provide for an opportunity for new recruitment and for folks to be promoted...," Murphy continued.

"We've gone for a bill that a week ago, would've costed the citizens of Baltimore and taxpayers several million dollars a year, to a bill that costs about $500,000 a year," said Councilman Landers.

"We've also gone from a bill that could have potentially seen 25-35 percent of the police force eligible for retirement in a single year."

But the new plan "I think helps to relieve the pressure of the department as far as there being a mass exodus." That mass exodus will not happen now, Landers said.

Under the bill, the city can compete with other fire and police departments around the region. By July 1990, workers will pay seven percent more to the pension plan, a two percent increase from the current, five percent.

Some fire and police workers felt Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham tried to thwart the pension's improvement, but Cunningham said, "That was unfair."

"That's life in politics," said Cunningham.

Fourth District Councilman Lawrence Bell, III, concerned about minorities and women said the new pension system was very timely, because it allowed for discussion of promotions for minorities and women in the two departments.

Two months ago, the NAACP complained that the police department had failed to promote minorities.

"This gives us an opportunity to address this issue," Bell said. "I hope that those who are in the lower echelons, perhaps can begin to move up."

"I hope we can deal with that," Bell said.

Paramedics are not included in the new pension system, but Council President Mary Pat Clarke hopes they will be soon.

"It's a good feeling knowing that we have two great departments in the city ... that are dedicated with men and women looking out for our lives, day in and day out," D'Adamo said.

Succeeding in non-traditional sports

By Oliver Thompson

WASHINGTON

A Black man over 50, still running track and winning and a black man among the leading country and western dance competitors are hard to find. The AFRO has uncovered two who are doing just fine and enjoying ever minute of it. Larry Colbert, the track star and Lloyd Thompson, the dancing star have gone one step beyond the usual. They are setting records and breaking new grounds for the Blacks who think its all over at a certain age or type of competition.

Colbert has competed in track since 1977. He was first noticed by a gentleman as he was running recreationally as therapy for a back ailment. After some influence he ran in his first competition in his Chuck Tailors at the age of 35. Colbert lost in each event, but he had found a new love. Since that day, he has pursued an ambition and life's work in competing in track and helping others enjoy the sport.

Lloyd Thompson looked into a popular Country and Western Bar and Lounge in 1985 and saw something he liked. People were dancing the step he was somewhat familiar with, the 2 step and the Waltz. For flavor they were doing the Shuffle and the Western Swing. He liked what he saw and in he went. Three years later, he and his partner are among the top 5 Country and Western Couples Dancers. He was asked to join a group called the Dance West, a national champion dance club. After a year, he 's truck out on his own.

Meanwhile Colbert was competing and winning in the World Games. He ranked 4th in the 100 meters (11.38), 5th in the 200 meters (23.67) and 2nd in the 400 meter (52.2) which earned him a silver medal. Mr. Colbert has competed in Puerto Rico, Sweden and Canada. He has anchored the U.. relay team inhisclass as they set a world record in the 4 x 100 in 45.32.

"I started late", Colbert said, "I couldn't participate in high school. I had to work. I came from a large family (11 including parents) and everybody had to help out.

Since taking up competitive dancing Lloyd has placed in ever contest he has entered. He has travelled to Wichita, Kansas; Knoxville, Tenn.; Reno, Nevada; and Grantville, Pa. There are usually 50 or more couples competing. Lloyd and his partner have finished 5th once, 4th once, 3rd nine times and 2nd two times. He has two 3rd place national championships and one 2nd place national championship to his credit.

I do it for the fun and I love the exercise", says Thompson. "I also get to meet a lot of interesting people and travel, I love to travel".

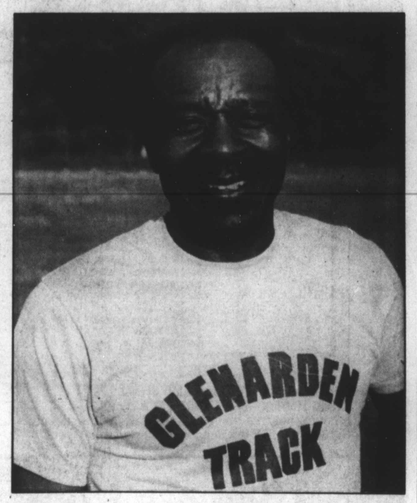
Colbert loves the youth he works with all year. They have just qualified 53 of them from his Glenarden Track Club to compete in the Jr. Olympic trails Regional at Athens, Ga. The winners move on to the championship in Florida. Colbert is proud that he is able to give something back. "I owe so much to Coach Stan Mullins. He really guided me into all of this. The man is great in my book". Mullins was a successful track coach at H.D. Woodson. He now coaches track and field at UDC.

Colbert spreads his track enthusiasm at work with the USDA. He has a "lunch bunch" who engage in jogging and light aerobic. "I want to do my part to stop this drug thing. Track can do a lot for youngsters".

Lloyd, the dancer, has done some reading about Blacks in the old West and their contributions. "This hobby has taken me in different directions. There is also the learning and awareness side. Did you know," he went on, "that 60 percent of the cowboys in the Old West were non-white, Mexican, Indians and Blacks comprised those numbers?"

His most interesting books read to date are 'Black West' and 'Buffalo Soldiers'. "There is a lot to discover," he said.

Mrs. Colbert and her four children are behind Colbert all the way. The community does its part as well. "Fund-raising is getting harder these days", said Colbert. "We need more help. The bake sales and chicken dinners won't make it.



(Special to the AFRO by Ed Anderson)
MASTER'S TRACK STAR, Larry Colbert, the world's record holder and community worker.

LEGAL NOTICES

I.F.B. #88-022
MARKET HOUSE HVAC — PHASE I

The Central Purchasing Office of the City of Annapolis will be accepting sealed bids for Alterations to the City of Annapolis Market House HVAC-Phase I, until Thursday, July 7, 1988, 10:00 a.m. at which time they will be opened and read aloud in the City Council Chamber, Second Floor, City Hall 160 Duke of Gloucester Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

Bid specifications may be obtained at the Central Purchasing Office, Room 108, City Hall, for a (non-refundable) fee of $20.00.

A **mandatory** Pre-Bid Conference will be held in the City Council Chamber, Wednesday, June 29, at 10:00 a.m.

The City of Annapolis reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive informalities, and select that bid deemed to be in the best interest of the City.

BRIAN D. SNYDER
PURCHASING AGENT

NOTICE

Chemung Contracting Corporation is bidding as a prime contractor ont he following MDSHA contract: Anne Arundel County AA-132-503-572 Interstate Route 97 From MD. 178 at Dorr's Corner to South of Brightview Drive, which will be bid Tuesday, June 28, 1988.

We request quotations from suppliers and/or subcontractors for work on this project. This contract contains requirements for participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and their submittals are encouraged.

Interested parties should contact: Estimating Department, Chemung Contracting Corp., P.O. Box 90, Utica, N.Y. 13503, telephone 1-315-792-8025.

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Housing security discussed at conference

By Alicia Benjamin
AFRO Staff Writer

Members of housing authority agencies along the east coast convened at the Lord Baltimore Hotel Tuesday to discuss ways to ensure a safe environment for public housing residents.

The Venture For Quality Public Housing, which includes eight public housing authorities in the third federal Housing and Urban Development region, sponsored the housing conference where security related issues in housing developments were discussed at the Baltimore Hotel.

Workshops sessions during the first day of the conference included such topics as tenant security programs, insurance and liability issues and special security issues in high rise buildings.

The second day of the conference included workshop sessions such as tenant selection and eviction techniques, drugs and public housing and working with local police.

Sergeant Andre Street of the Special Tactical Operations Patrol division of the Baltimore City Police said he pushed for the enforcement of public housing trespassing laws when he started with the STOP squad.

"Many people who come into the housing units causing problems, don't live there," Street said.

People were congregating inside and outside of the public housing buildings to sell and buy drugs, according to Street.

Those caught trespassing in public housing facilities are given the maximum sentence of days in jail, unless they have no prior criminal record, said Street.

If trespassers have no prior record, they are required to clean the yards of the facility, said Street.

"This is a way for kids to see their drug pusher role models in a negative light," said the sergeant.

To get police more involved in making public housing more secure for residents, Street advised the conference participants tell law enforcement officials that management and residents care about their community.

Street told them to request to have police officers act as liaisons to the community.

"You have to cry out to local police and let them know that you care," said Street.

Jim Stockert, Commissioner of the Cambria Housing Authority in Boston gave one workshop audience some hints about how to involve the police in public housing communities.

"Reward the police and tell them that they are valuable," said Stockert.

Police respond better when housing authorities and residents ask them what they need to better assist the public housing developments, said Stockert.

"When you demand that they do something for you, the response is never good," he added.

Luncheon speakers were Michael Dorsey, General Counsel for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Juan Williams, Washington Post journalist and author of "Eyes On The Prize."

The Venture group has been sharing information, techniques and experiences to create solutions to security problems in public housing facilities in their areas.

Baltimore City's Housing Authority is included in the eight member Venture group.

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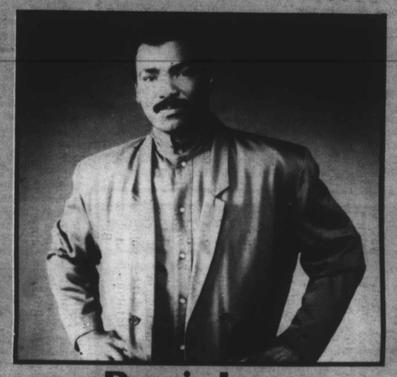
Friday Plus

THE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FOR THE BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON AFRO- AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

June 24, 1988

Gladys Knight and The Pips



Ronnie Laws

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