

Saulmon Picked to Head Arlington School Board

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Arlington School Board member William M. Graham sharply criticized what he termed "a concession to smoke-filled rooms" as the board elected Dr. Ernest E. Saulmon as its chairman last night.

Graham absented himself from the board room during the election to protest his exclusion from informal discussion which resulted in the election of Saulmon. He said he was protesting the method of selecting Saulmon rather than the choice.

Saulmon, who is a veterinarian, was absent from the meeting on a business trip abroad.

Contacted after the meeting, Henry St. John FitzGerald, who officially joined the board last night, said he was notified of

Saulmon's selection "in the same way Graham was" — in a telephone call from Homer Lee Krout, a board member, soliciting his opinion. FitzGerald nominated Krout as vice chairman last night.

Spicer Did Not Seek Job

Dr. John Reed Spicer acknowledged that in the board's tradition of rotating the chairmanship, he would have been next in line. He had served as chairman for two months, filling the unexpired term of Preston C. Caruthers, who was appointed to the state board of education.

"However," Spicer said at the meeting, "I have not sought it (the chairmanship)" and recently, he said, "I have felt very clearly that I should not take the position." He did not elaborate.

Graham said he hoped his exclusion from the pre-meeting discussions "is a highly personal slight" because "otherwise, political considerations are suspect and this would be an unfortunate new precedent for the conduct of the business of the school system."

Graham is the only Democrat on the board, but observers said partisan political considerations were probably not involved.

Graham Rejoins Meeting

There was little dissension during the rest of the meeting, in which Graham participated. At the end, Krout said, "each of the board members is a capable individual . . . I don't think that we are out of accord."

The board settled a long-standing dispute when it agreed

to turn over to the county board funds from the state's condemnation of the Hoffman-Boston school site for the widening of Shirley Highway. The school board said it hoped the county board would earmark the funds for school construction.

In the past, there has been sharp disagreement between the boards over who administers the proceeds from the sale of school lands.

In other business, the board approved final plans for the innovative Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and Recreation Center and decided to ask the county board to liberalize retirement benefits for school employees in line with recent improvements in the county employees' retirement system.