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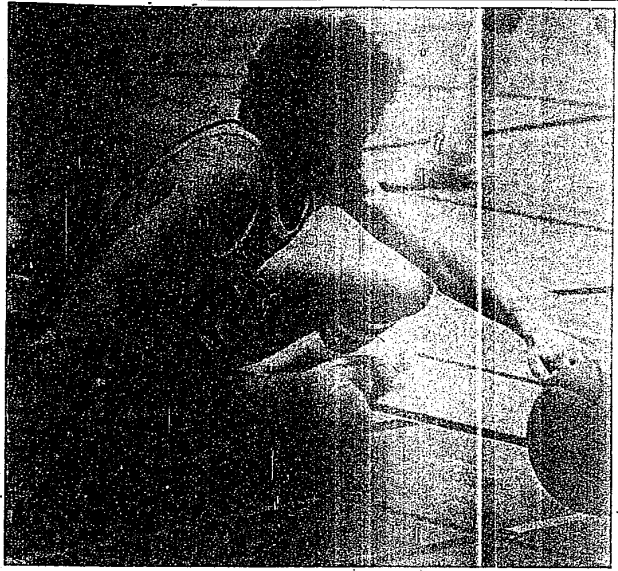
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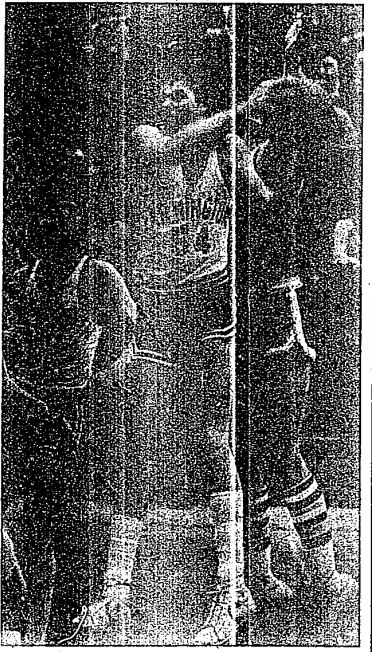
Twenty-Five Cents

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The ups and downs

Harrison Hawk John Cable (33) scrambles for the ball, but his efforts are for naught as is exemplified by Farmington High School Falcon Dave Spence (right) who participated in the victory over the Hawks 62-59. To see details of the game, turn to the sports page 6-7A



Pols debate merits of co-op fire teams

Representatives from six communities have begun hewing out a plan for a firefighting cooperative that would allow each area to retain its own identity and powers.

The organization of the co-op, common dispatch system, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and standardizing of equipment were discussed during the first meeting of the study group.

Representatives from Farmington, Farmington Hills, Commerce Township, West Bloomfield Township and Walled Lake met last week in Farmington City Council chambers to come to grips with a plan that would be feasible for seven communities.

Wisnom's representative was absent. The cooperative was chosen over consolidation to quell fears that a central authority would overshadow the identity of the communities.

"We want to retain the identity of each agency," said Steven Lloyd, a senior associate with Public Administration Services (PAS), which handled the feasibility study.

"None of the fire departments are going to get out of the business of providing services to its particular area," Lloyd said.

IN ADDITION, EACH OF THE communities has basic fire services, already. Consolidation would be redundant, said Lloyd. "It's doubtful that Farmington would want to upset its Public Safety concept by watering it down with consolidation."

Some concern over retaining the power of the individual communities lingered after Lloyd's reassurances. "It would seem to me that Steve's recommending that we give up some control," said Farmington Hills City Mgr. George Majors, in reference to the PAS report.

"It isn't giving up authority," answered Farmington City Councilman Alton Bennett. "The fire chiefs will work together to make recommendations for the system."

He was backed by Farmington City Mgr. Robert Deadman.

"I don't think that firemen are hung up over giving up authority for comprehensive training," he said.

The fire co-op will be designed so that each fire chief will have the right to look over a suggestion before it reaches the co-op's planning board, said Deadman.

MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING BOARD could be chosen by city management or be specially elected to the group, said Lloyd. "If (the board) would consider the long-range needs of the communities."

As an alternative to an agency with a formal director, Lloyd suggested an advisory group of fire chiefs from each of the communities.

Both alternative agencies would need a full-time director, Lloyd said.

"We want to steer clear of the ward 'authority.' It smacks of big brother.

What this set up needs is a buddy," he said.

One of the joint projects the co-op's directing agency would have to coordinate is an EMS program.

EMS probably will be instituted later in the program's development, according to the group. "There's a general feeling in the public sector about private ambulance companies," said Lloyd.

"The public has had bad experiences with the private companies," he said.

MAJORS AGREED with that assessment.

"Ours is one of the communities that experimented with a private company for five months and found that it wasn't satisfactory.

"Our concern was in the caliber of the private company's personnel. They don't offer the types of salaries to get the type of personnel that we'd want," Majors said.

If a community puts its money into a private ambulance company, it may

as well pay for its own EMS system, according to West Bloomfield Township Supervisor John Doherty.

"In three years of putting money into a private service, you have a million dollars of nothing," he said.

"There is mounting pressure in the area for this service," Lloyd said. "West Bloomfield is getting into it. If it's done on an area-wide basis, you have a better coordination of units.

"It's an essential but expensive service," he said.

Another source of expense in the system is the installment of a common dispatch system to allow for nearby communities to assist each other automatically in fighting fires.

"THERE'S ALREADY A LOT OF mutual aid between the communities," Lloyd said.

"But automatic responses on a first alarm basis would be beneficial, especially in border areas that are in no-man's land, now."

Eventually, the chiefs could install

(Continued on page 8A)

...but financing is main concern

Concerns about financing a firefighting cooperative and an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) program surfaced during the fire study group's first session last week.

The co-op approach requires that each community contribute toward the cost of joint programs, such as EMS or a central dispatch system.

Mindful of tight budgets, Public Administration Services (PAS) recommended in its report that the joint approach be structured so that additional services to the program could be gradually added.

"Even if such added services as central dispatch and EMS were left out, the cooperative program would still be effective," explained Steven Lloyd, a senior associate with PAS.

Initially, to enter the arrangement, there shouldn't be a great outlay of money for any community. Additional services could be brought in when the community desires. That's where the expense comes in," he said.

Extraneous such as a centralized fire dispatch probably could be financed with existing funds, according to Lloyd.

"BY SETTING UP THE NUCLEUS of the program, it's flexible enough to pick up this option after two to four years," he said.

"When you add on these services on a shared basis, it's doubtful whether the community would have to levy additional millage."

An EMS program would cost the

communities from \$175,000 to \$200,000, according to Lloyd.

"With EMS, you'd probably require an additional millage," he added.

"With everyone contributing, I think we could raise a substantial amount among ourselves with a one-mill increase," Farmington City Mgr. Robert Deadman said.

One mill levied in six communities would raise about \$12 million, said Lloyd.

Other communities are hesitant to approve the cost of the project, without consulting their city or township governments.

"Everyone's pushing away from the table a little before seeing what it'd cost," said West Bloomfield Township Supervisor John Doherty.

Novi's representatives admitted that money also was a major concern in their community.

"WE'RE A GROWING COMMUNITY," said Novi Councilman Bob Schmidt. "We haven't reached our tax base. Our taxes are going up, and we anticipate a police problem with the new shopping center."

"EMS is a long way off to me in Novi. We have bonds to pay off and we have no idea how to do that," said Schmidt.

"Although EMS only was one of several issues discussed, its cost made it a recurring point of the meeting.

"EMS is a major selling point," Deadman said.

Bibeau takes the helm as chief law adviser

A month after the death of his partner, Terry Brennan, attorney Paul Bibeau, 37, says he is ready to tackle many of the challenges faced by the law firm which serves both Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield.

In a recent interview Bibeau talked fondly of Brennan, a man who was his legal mentor. He also compared the problems of the two suburban areas,

touching on the effects of Northwestern Highway on the township, the prolonged contract dispute in the Hills police department and the senior citizen housing flap.

He also considered the role of a city attorney as he sat in the offices shared with Brennan since 1968.

Bibeau came to Brennan's law firm after serving as a research law clerk for the Wayne County Circuit Court. "Terry and I were different types of persons. He was Irish and a perfectionist. I'm not, as keyed up as to perfection. But we balanced each other out. It worked out well," he says.

The University of Detroit law school graduate surveyed the neat stacks of paperwork on his desk which takes up much of the space in the 6 all yellow room. A fireplace stands behind the desk.

In the front of the office, near the door, a bookcase and a credenza vie for space. A color photo of Brennan stands on the credenza.

"It's a nice homey place," Bibeau continues. "It's informal. This profession is rat-racy enough. We thought of moving into an office building, but then it always seem like a rat race there. It's always tense there," he says. He reflected on the role of a "good"



Paul Bibeau

city attorney, saying it was important that competent advice be given to elected officials since they were working in the public trust.

"HE SHOULD WIPE away the political ramifications from a decision. The officials may not like the decision because of political overtones. But a good city attorney should advise his clients properly and avoid litigation," Bibeau explains.

In Farmington Hills, his cases usually are limited to challenges to the city's zoning ordinances. But he has a minor part in the case that would he would like to see closed.

"I'd like to see the police pay case over with," he says.

The contract dispute between the patrolmen and Farmington Hills revolves around a disagreement over the amount of money for a cost of living increase. The Hills administration believes that the cost of living increase in the disputed contract is a misunderstanding. But the police union is attempting to get the city to abide by the contract.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE that the court would say that it isn't a mistake," he says. "There's a lot of money involved in this case. And the attitude that seems to prevail in the police department about the cost of living increase bothers me."

Senior citizen housing is another prime concern of Bibeau's. He lauds the planning commission for its attempts to solve the problems.

"I think the way that the planning commission is working within the existing statutes is a step in the right direction. We're only making the classification available," he says.

Presently, the city is working towards providing for senior citizen

housing without creating a special zoning designation.

"Where the developers want to apply the classification is the sticky issue. There has to be transportation and shopping near places already zoned for multiple housing," he says.

He anticipates some dissension from homeowners if a senior multiple dwelling was proposed for a residential district.

He suggests that the city take another look at its master plan if the senior apartments are to be built in areas other than those already zoned for multiple dwellings.

Farmington Hills neighbor, West Bloomfield, has given Bibeau a different set of concerns. The two areas may have been similar years ago, but they are now growing at different paces, according to Bibeau.

"Farmington Hills quickly is expanding into various departments with various services that the township could never provide," says Bibeau about the two-year-old city.

Because it is a chartered city, Farmington Hills can service its roads and sewers. It's able to provide services.

inside

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To the victors

The Farmington High School Hawks moved up a notch in the class A finals by beating out the Denby Tars, 97-89. For details turn to the sports section.