

Deadman eyes austere year in Farmington

Farmington residents can expect a slight decrease in the level of city services in 1979, reports City Manager Bob Deadman.

The combined impact of the Headlee tax limitation amendment, which puts a ceiling on government spending, and loss of CETA funds in October will result in some department cuts.

Ten per cent of the city's 62 employees are CETA-funded. Most are employed in the Department of Public Works, which will result in cuts of services like leaf pick-up, sewer repair and park maintenance.

'Yes' vote sought for college

By TIM RICHARD

Richard Hayward, the only Schoolcraft College trustee with no political background, raised the delicate question of the seven trustees missed.

How is the community college going to recruit more than 8,500 "yes" votes for a property tax proposal on the March 26 ballot?

Hayward, appointed to the board last August, raised the question at the tail end of the board's Jan. 11 meeting, almost two hours after trustees decided to ask voters to authorize up to one mill for five years.

"There are 8,500 'no' votes, automatic," said the structural steel company executive. "We need to get 8,501 or 8,502 — or 8,503 in case of a recount."

Traditionally the voters in the five K-12 districts in the college district have cast at least 8,500 votes against trustee requests like this one.

"A COMMITTEE will be set up very quickly," said Board Chairman Paul Kadish. "It would be good if every member of the board were on the committee."

Vice-chairman Harry Greenleaf suggested plans be outlined not in a large committee but by only two or three persons, then approved by a committee.

Other trustees pointed out they had only a couple of months to work.

Other than that, there was no discussion of how the board plans to spend the money and what it must do to convince the public to vote it.

ONE MILL is \$1 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation. On a house with a market value of \$50,000, assessed for taxes at half that amount, one mill will cost \$25 a year.

District-wide, one mill will raise about \$2 million the first year and a total of \$12 million over five years, considering growth of the tax base.

The board has yet to spell out precisely where the money will go, but top priority is to raise \$400,000 more locally for the Culinary Arts addition to the Waterman Campus Center. That is a \$1.5 million project, when state aid and the current bank balance are added.

A second priority will be a new library and remodeling of the current Bradner Library into offices and classroom space. The current library is considered to be about half the size Schoolcraft should have, accrediting agencies say.

Other previously discussed priorities are major maintenance and a new road to the west side of the campus from Six Mile.

The ballot proposal specifies only capital expenditure, site improvement and maintenance.

BOARD MEMBERS revealed they had declined to take advantage of a "one-day law" which would have allowed them to float a bond issue by resolution and without voter approval.

The so-called Headlee Amendment, approved by voters Nov. 7 and taking effect Dec. 22, prohibits general obligation bond issues without voter approval.

So the Michigan Legislature passed, and Gov. Milliken signed on Dec. 20, a bill allowing charter authorities to start the bond issue process by a simple resolution on Dec. 21. Charter authorities include nearly all cities and villages, a few townships and a college such as Schoolcraft organized by charter.



Overseeing the police dispatch operation is Farmington Hills Police Inspector Thomas Godwin (standing), Duane Cowger and Linda Ziegler operate the board. (Staff photo by Harry Maathe)

Dispatch Cops nervous system

By MARY GNIEWEK

The central nervous system of the Farmington Hills police department is nestled inside a small, narrow room with blue fluorescent lights and map-covered walls.

The dispatch room, a 24-hour operation, is the vital communications link between people in distress and the police, fire and emergency rescue squads. The communications system also aids the local police in nabbing suspected criminals or checking out a driver's record in a snap.

Like the human brain, the dispatch operation is a coordinating mechanism that responds to outside stimuli. A dispatcher is the first person to take your call for help and dispense aid through the appropriate channel.

VIA RADIO COMMUNICATION, patrol cars are dispatched to accident scenes and the numerous other types of situations that call for police intervention, such as robberies, family trouble or something as simple as being locked out of your car.

"In an emergency, the operators have to calm a person down. Like if a wife calls because her husband has just suffered a heart attack, it's vital to get the proper information and act quickly," said Inspector Thomas Godwin.

The Hills dispatch operation uses two computers. The state-operated LEIN computer can instantly list the traffic offenses and arrest warrants of any licensed driver on a television screen. The Court Law Enforcement Information System (CLEMIS) provides regional information. Farmington Hills is one of 34 Oakland County police departments who use CLEMIS.

FARMINGTON HILLS EMPLOY nine dispatchers, five of whom are paid with federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) money. At least two operators are always on duty, one in touch with patrol cars, the other monitoring fire and medical emergency calls.

Godwin said the entire operation depends on the continuation of CETA aid. The city could not afford to staff the division with police officers, he said.

The department handles between 1200 and 1500 police and 60 fire calls a month. Calls peak with emergencies, such as storms. The operators dispatch tow trucks, ambulances and utility trucks to repair fallen wires.

"THE BUSIEST TIME of day is between 7 p.m. and 3 a.m.," Godwin said. "The calls usually peak at midnight or 1 a.m."

"The dispatcher must know how many patrol cars are on duty, who is in and who is out of service. Everything is logged, we don't rely on memory. During the day, there are four to six cars out. In the afternoon, we have 12 to 15 cars on the road."

Each time a patrol car is sent on a run, the dispatcher records the time of the call, the time the vehicle is dispatched as well as arrival and completion times.

On fire calls, the operator alerts and dispatches fire trucks depending on location and type of fire. If a fire occurs near the city limits, other departments may be notified. Full-time firemen also operate the medical units, which are dispatched directly from police headquarters during daytime emergencies.

"It's a demanding position," Godwin said. "They take a lot of undo criticism from people. For their responsibility, they do an outstanding job."

Traffic fatality spurs enforcement crusade

By MARY GNIEWEK

One person was killed and four others injured in a two-car, head-on collision Thursday night on Middlebelt between of Eleven Mile in Farmington Hills.

Nicholas Melas, 24, of Southfield, was pronounced dead on arrival at Botsford Hospital following the 10 p.m. accident. The driver of the car, Leo Stassingoules, 28, also of Southfield, was listed in serious condition in the intensive care unit at Botsford Friday.

ALSO AT BOTSFORD Friday were two of the three persons in the second car involved. Leka Camaj, 21, of Farmington Hills, was listed in satisfactory condition. She suffered a fractured jaw and concussion. Saad Nalu of Southfield was listed in stable condition with facial lacerations.

Tony Camaj, 18, of Southfield, was treated at Botsford and released Thursday night.

It was the first traffic fatality of the year recorded in Farmington Hills. Last year, there was three road fatalities.

C'ville will request dual tax collection

The Clarencenville school board, following a public hearing Thursday, will petition the City of Farmington Hills for the approval of a dual tax collection for the district.

About 30 persons attended the public hearing held in Edgewood Elementary School, Farmington Hills. No one voiced objections to the dual tax collection in which Farmington Hills would collect taxes in July and in January rather than once a year in the winter as is now the case.

Main concerns of residents appeared to be whether this system would mean more taxes. Trustee Norman L. Hunt said the twice yearly collection would not cost any more, "unless of course other taxes go up."

"Residents will pay 40 per cent of the current bill in July and the remaining 60 per cent in January," Hunt said.

In question of the advantages of the proposal, Samuel Prisk, the District president, said the district would have saved \$16,000 in interest payments on bills if the dual tax collection had been in effect this year.

Supt. David McJannet said that using this year's figures, the District would have received about 40 per cent, or \$318,000, of the \$797,000 Farmington Hills' tax money in July.

"If we had received the \$318,000 in July, it would have reduced the amount the district needed to borrow on anticipation of state aid from \$550,000 to \$632,000.

"The district would have benefited by not having to pay 5.04 per cent interest on the \$318,000 which would be, as Prisk said, about \$16,000."

Bill Prisk, business manager for Farmington, was in attendance and told the gathering Farmington had been using the dual tax collection for some time with no problems.

"Since we have had this system, we haven't had to borrow. Prior to this we were paying an ever increasing interest payment. That cost would have risen to about \$300,000 by now."

If the Farmington Hills City Council approves the Clarencenville request, it would take effect July 1.

Property owners in Farmington Hills, except those in the Clarencenville School District, now pay their school taxes twice a year. Taxpayers in Livonia and Redford would not be affected by the plan since state law does not permit a dual collection there.



Farmington Hills resident Floyd Kupkowski examines his damaged truck after a vehicle careened off the road and hit it. (Staff photo)

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That's the word from columnist Louise Okrutsky who tells us some of her favorites on this week's column page. To see what she has to say turn to page 4B.