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YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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today's hot line

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what's inside

Nasty, Nasty!

Democrats normally have nasty things to say about Republicans, and vice versa, and this was the week that was in Farmington Township. Farmington Democrats are chiding the township administration for its road paving policies and attempts to shift the blame for higher taxes.

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Latest On PRD

A few months back Farmington Township adopted a zoning ordinance to provide for a Planned Residential Development (PRD), supposed to involve a mixture of residential housing types. The township has rescinded its first PRD zoning request which planners think is not mixed up enough.

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To The Ballot!

Foes of parochialism have picked Dr. Kenneth Carman of Garden City the Wayne County head of a drive to place an anti-parochial constitutional amendment on the November ballot. Leonard Poger tells how many signatures they'll need and how they'll operate. See Regional Affairs.

Last Town Hall

The future of one of this area's three Town Halls is in jeopardy. Can Mr. ESP make a difference?

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River Squabble

The county drain commissioner is sore at a county road engineer over the question of who has the power to tackle a serious pollution problem on the Middle Rouge River. Once again, Roving Editor W.W. Edgar has ferreted out a story well ahead of the daily papers, the broadcasters and the competition.

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Budget Shows Another City Millage Reduction

By EMORY DANIELS

For the fourth consecutive year, the City of Farmington hopes to reduce its tax millage rate in an attempt to offset the rising state equalized value (SEV) factor applied by the Oakland County Equalization Board.

In the draft budget prepared for fiscal year 1970-71, City Manager John Dinan is asking for a reduction from 9 to 8.5 mills (a decrease of 50 cents per \$1,000 state equalized valuation).

THE DRAFT BUDGET was presented to the city council Monday night for study before setting a public hearing.

Mrs. Vignoe Quits Job In Disgust

Mrs. Catherine Vignoe has resigned from the Farmington Township Road Committee and, in doing so, expressed her disappointment with the township's inaction in the south end and anger over the decision to pave Nine Mile and Drake.

In resigning, Mrs. Vignoe said she was not disillusioned over the committee's inability to function in a meaningful way because "everyone is aware that every chance a citizen might have to help serve his community is nearly railroaded by the powers that be."

"It is shameful that the lack of cooperation from the very foundation of the community we live in must result in this."

MRS. VIGNOE SAID she attended meetings of the road committee with an optimistic

outgoing general needed maintenance, or by requesting gravel for an area or needed ditching.

AS DISCUSSION continued, the committee asked the township administration to keep members informed of any road improvement action which might be forthcoming.

"We were never given that information, nor any other information that could have and would have helped as in our study or given us knowledge."

"For many years, the citizens of the township have had to endure the poor mechanics of a machine that always used the same spool. We can't do anything for you, we don't even own a shovel or a wheelbarrow, the county is responsible," etc.

See Related Stories
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attitude but could no longer be a part of the committee.

When the committee was formed by the Township Board last year, she explained, it was hoped residents might see a change for the better in township policy on roads.

Mrs. Vignoe said she had hoped that representatives from all corners of the township could meet, compile facts as they exist and ideas for the future could be "melted into a final form that is desperately needed for our fast growing community."

The present hodge-podge of antiquated policies which are considered guidelines for road problems, Mrs. Vignoe says, "has only resulted in the unrealistic and unfair conditions which now exist."

"It was the opportunity of administration that only sees expansion and population as the end result of good planning. No one cares to remember that those taxed dollars are from warm, human beings that work and hope for a better world, or at least a home town to be proud of and well remembered by their children."

IN A LETTER to Supervisor Curtis Hall, Mrs. Vignoe summarized initial findings made by the committee regarding the south end of the township. South-end representatives on the committee, she wrote, found the section to the north of 11 Mile was tolerant of the road situation, but ditching and drainage were a problem.

Some committee members were aware that south of 11 Mile was a situation which needed some type of plan, she wrote.

Suggestions included either naming streets by priority in the committee's judgment, by

The council has gone on record as favoring millage reductions to offset rising SEV and is expected to approve the half-mill decrease.

In spite of the millage reduction, however, City of Farmington taxpayers will be asked to pay more in actual dollars when tax bills for '70-71 are mailed.

Dinan explained that because of rising costs, he was unable to completely offset the SEV hike by the millage reduction.

WHAT HAPPENED is the proposed millage decrease is 5.5% while the county is expected to hike the SEV factor by 13%.

The result will be that during '70-71 local property taxes, even at a lower millage rate, will produce 9% more revenue than during the current budget year, which ends June 30.

While the City of Farmington collects 9% more (\$41,600) from local property taxes, the city will receive 35% more (\$73,000) from state-returned taxes.

The budget Dinan is asking the council to approve is 6.9% or \$58,330 higher than the current '69-70 budget.

If the city were to levy nine mills instead of dropping the half-mill, the budget will be about \$27,000 richer.

IF THE COUNCIL approves the half-mill reduction, as expected, the city's tax rate will be about 30%



NEW PODIUM—The Farmington Community Center has received a new podium to be used by the many guest speakers visiting the Center. The donation was made by the Farmington Jaycee Auxiliary from revenues from such community projects as the rummage sale and cook book sale. Mrs. Alberto Taylor (left), director of the Center, accepts the gift from Auxiliary President Mrs. Nancy Dittmer (Everett photo).

CBD Plan Gets OK

City Councilman Monday night unanimously approved the Central Business District (CBD) ordinance and heard reports about future steps to be taken to redevelop the downtown area in the City of Farmington.

After the 5-0 approval vote, City Manager John Dinan reported on plans to upgrade the existing C-2 zone into a community commercial classification and establish a C-3, general commercial, zone.

Dinan also reported the downtown redevelopment sub-committee of the planning commission has assigned individual members the following study tasks: Richard Tupper, high-rise office ordinances; Jim Platt, parking and traffic flow; Dennis Pheneay, aesthetic and historical preservation; and Don Stoddard, sign regulations.

DINAN'S PROPOSED city budget for fiscal year 1970-71 was presented to the council which voted to hold a public hearing on May 14 starting at 8 p.m.

A resolution introduced by Councilman John Richardson

lower than when the city levied 11.5 mills in 1966-67.

Last year, the county increased local assessments by 15% and the council countered by lowering the city's tax rate from 10 to 9 mills.

The budget still increased by 3.7%.

This year, the county has announced its intentions to apply a factor of 1.28 to the city, a 1.3% increase, and the council is expected to counter with a half-mill millage decrease which will result in a budget increase of 6.9%.

"In analyzing this year's budget," says Dinan, "we find that although it is a record budget and nearing the \$1 million mark, we have been able to retain our position for the 10th consecutive year of not increasing our tax rate."

"The large inflationary factors have been in salary adjustments that continuously increase at a rapid rate in an effort to stay abreast of the high cost of living increases that are being generated throughout our entire economy."

THE CITY HAS been fortunate, says Dinan, because its rapid growth rate has aided in offsetting inflationary costs.

"This new increased assessed valuation within the community has added to the economic vitality that has been given by the economic development of the newly annexed area."

"With the high demands for wage increases, cost of material, each year it becomes more difficult to operate within the framework of a stable tax rate."

Dinan said his tight budget received a boost from the increase in state-returned revenues because of the 1970 census. Last year, state revenues were returned on the basis of the 1960 census, but '70-71 returns will be based on the population count of the 1970 census.

Because the city has grown by 70% since 1960 with the state's population increasing by only 15%, the city will receive an additional \$73,000 from the state during 1970-71.

The total estimated state-returned revenues for '70-71 will be \$280,900 compared to an anticipated collection of \$496,800 from local property taxes.

The budget must receive final council approval by the third Monday in May.

Taxes Will Still Rise

In 1966-67, it cost the City of Farmington a half-million dollars (\$563,000) to provide residents necessary services.

In that year, the city levied 11.5 mills (\$11.50 per \$1,000 equalized valuation) and collected about \$318,000 from local taxpayers.

The proposed budget for 1970-71 shows it will cost almost \$1 million (\$901,000) to provide residents necessary services. A proposed tax rate of 8.5 mills is expected to raise about \$496,800 from local taxpayers.

IF THAT puzzles you, a look at the '66-67 budget provides an explanation.

In 1966-67 the city's total equalized valuation was \$36.9 million compared to an estimated \$35.5 million in 1970-71.

A thumb-nail review of the past four years shows the City of Farmington's tax base (SEV) has more than doubled, while its tax rate has decreased by 20%.

During the past four years, the city's total SEV has grown by 119% while the budget has grown by 66%, and the amount of money paid by local taxpayers has grown by 35%.

City Manager John Dinan says the 1970-71 record budget is a tight one and directly reflects the inflationary spiral of the nation's economy.

THE STRONGEST economic factor affecting operating cost is personnel salaries, says Dinan.

The proposed budget includes recommended pay hikes of 7-10% depending upon job classifications.

Dinan explains these raises are necessary to stay competitive because a study of salaries paid by other communities showed Farmington was below the median.

Capital improvements also account for the 6.9% budget

increase over last year. A major item will be purchase of a complete new radio system for the Public Safety Department.

The present police radio system was purchased 22 years ago and the last addition to the system was in 1957, which means the newest radio equipment is already 12 years old, said Dinan.

Modern police radio equipment transmits over a 100-watt-power for base stations and 60-100 watts for mobile units. Dinan told councilmen Monday night "The city's system transmits 50 watts for the base station and 25 watts from mobile equipment."

Capital improvements for the Public Works Department include purchase of a heavy-duty truck, stake truck and pickup truck.

WITHIN THE BUDGET, the biggest increases being allowed are to the public safety account. It would receive \$34,000 more if council approves Dinan's recommendations.

All but \$4,000 of that increase will go for salary increases. About \$1,300 has been added to the public safety account for capital improvements.

Dinan is asking \$26,000 more for the public works fund. The increase is primarily to cover capital expenditures and includes an additional \$12,000 for streets and roads and an extra \$6,000 for garbage pickup.

THE CITY'S DESIRE to hold an annexation election and to redevelop its downtown area will result in a cost of \$10,000 during 1970-71, according to budget estimates.

The budget includes an extra \$4,900 to pay attorney Burton Shiltman for special legal serv-

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