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Twenty-Five Cents

Hopefuls file for trustee seats

By Tom Baer staff writer

Five candidates, four of them newcomers to elective politics, will try for one of the two openings on the Farmington Board of Education.

The top two vote getters in the June 11 school election will serve four-year terms on the seven-member board, which sets policy for a district with an annual budget of \$44.3 million.

Incumbent Helen D. Prutow, the board president, has announced that she'll be running for a third term. Trustee Jim McGilincy, whose term expires in June, has said he will not seek reelection.

The candidates are:

James J. Abernethy, 43, a professor of architecture at Southfield's Lawrence Institute of Technology and a member of the Farmington Planning Commission. Abernethy, a 17-year resident of Farmington, resides at 2155 Birchwood with his wife and two children, both in the public school system. The candidate has had experience with the city's zoning board of appeals, and serves as chairman of the architectural review committee of the Farmington Meadows Homeowners' Association.

James Thomas Buck, 25716 Power Road, Farmington Hills. The 33-year-old Buck is in charge of the education and training program at the General Motors Corp. truck and bus plant in Pontiac. An active member of the Farmington-area Jaycees, Buck heads a development program for club members. He also is involved in Junior Achievement programs. Buck and his wife have no school-age children.

Roxanne M. Fitzpatrick, a 32-year-old housewife, is the president of the Farmington PTA. Fitzpatrick has served on a district task force which studied the closing of Middlebell Elementary School and the sale of other properties. The mother of three children, two in the public schools, Fitzpatrick is a past president of the Farmington Welcome Wagon and secretary.



Happy holiday

Risa Alperin was among the many students at Hilltop Day School who helped to kick off the Passover holiday with a demonstration of the Seder meal for parents last week. Thousands of Jews throughout the area will be celebrating Passover this week.

Schools arm with alarms

By Tom Baer staff writer

Perhaps by the end of this school year, certainly by next September, all of Farmington's public school buildings will have alarm systems to warn police of intruders.

But don't expect school officials to provide many details about present or future alarm systems.

"We've always had alarm systems in some of our schools," said Farmington Superintendent Lewis Schulman, who has promised to beef up security in the district after burglars made off with more than \$40,000 in equipment and caused an additional \$1,500 damage in two visits to Farmington Harrison High School over a recent weekend.

"We never announce where they (the burglars) are, how they work or what they do," Schulman said. "These are the last things we want the crooks to know."

"Sometimes I feel like putting up these signs. This building is alarmed - even if it isn't alarmed."

Farmington Hills police say they plan to use information gained from informants to make at least one arrest early this week in connection with the burglaries, which occurred March 30 and 31.

"We have information, supplied by informants, which led us to some individuals out of Detroit," said Sgt. Al Heizer of the police department. "We believe we have sufficient information to proceed to the prosecutor, and hopefully start the warrants on Monday."

The suspects are not students or former students at Harrison High "as far as we know," Heizer said.

BUILDING SECURITY was on the minds of school officials at the April 10 board of education meeting. The district's Capital Needs Committee, made up of administrators and chaired by assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter, recommended to the board that alarm systems be placed in all schools.

Schulman, who estimated the cost of the additional alarms at \$46,700, said the proposal will come up for board approval "a little later on."

"But we're pretty sure the board will authorize it," he added. "According to the policy of the board, we can make a recommendation to them. But anything

over \$3,000 requires board approval. So we just let them know that our plans include setting alarms in all of our schools.

"They (members of the Capital Needs Committee) are going to explore it and come back with recommendations. They don't have the details right now."

The alarms will be installed "as soon as possible," Schulman said, and will be operative "in a short time."

The break-ins, which resulted in a day off for the 1,200 Harrison students while police combed the crime scene for clues, were accomplished when thieves removed a window next to the main entrance of the school on 12 Mile Road west of Middlebell.

Items stolen included seven Apple II computers, three word processors, four computerized typewriters, five electric typewriters and two microscopes.

The fact that districts have been going to expensive high technology equipment - computers, electronic typewriters, word processors - for students makes it necessary for us to be more zealous in terms of setting up security systems," Schulman said.

THE BUILDING was burglarized twice that weekend. The first break-in was discovered on Saturday, March 31, according to school officials.

Thieves concentrated on the building's third floor, where the gymnasium and classrooms are.

In addition to the equipment, burglars broke into a safe containing approximately \$25, and sprayed the contents of a fire extinguisher down a hallway. Other damage included broken classroom windows and locks.

Because of the large number of items taken, school officials believe a truck or van was used to haul away the stolen equipment.

Classes were back to normal by Tuesday, April 3, with equipment being shifted to Harrison from other schools in the district.

To compensate for the losses, some suppliers have agreed to speed up delivery of equipment already ordered, school officials said.

"We haven't had problems in the last couple of years," said Harrison principal James Geiger on the Monday after the break-ins. "But this could happen any weekend."

Clarenceville makes final district chief choice

By Teri Barnes staff writer

The assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum for the Brighton Area Schools has been picked as the new superintendent in Clarenceville.

Trustees selected Michael Shibler of Brighton Thursday night to replace the retiring David McDowell, who steps down after 10 years at the helm of the 2,000-student district which includes parts of Ilwaco, Redford Township and Farmington Hills.

Shibler, 37, has an extensive background in curriculum development as Brighton's assistant curriculum superintendent, a post he acquired at the age of 30. This background impressed

Clarenceville trustees in the selection process that started with 92 initial applicants last fall. Of those applicants, trustees selected eight semifinalists and conducted extensive public interviews before naming three finalists and then their top choice.

"Right now in education there's a feeling there has to be change. Education has to make a change toward excellence. So we're willing to get a fresh look at things," said Michael Manore, president of the Clarenceville School Board.

Manore said trustees were impressed with Shbler's accomplishments at Brighton, particularly his ability to work with people and "get things done." He cited Shbler's handling of contract negotiations and development of a merit pay incentive program for administrators as accomplishments that impressed trustees.

Both the EDC and city council have approved a project plan for the shopping center.

"THERE SEEMED to be general agreement (among trustees) that Mike could offer us the dynamic leadership we were looking for... and charisma, even though I'm not sure how to define that," Manore said. Shbler was selected by unanimous vote.

"In the beginning I was worried that we wouldn't have total agreement," Manore said. "And yet the board was unanimous. Now we can go in there united and look forward to next year." Shbler has worked for Brighton

Schools for 10 years. Before his appointment to the central office, he was the district's assistant high school principal. Before that, he worked as a math teacher in the Warren Consolidated Schools and as a football coach for the Birmingham Public Schools.

According to his resume, Shbler served as the district's chief negotiator, supervised layoffs and recalls, managed in-service programs, assisted in developing seven annual budgets, took part in millage and bond issue campaigns, evaluated administrators and led a task force on school closings.

Aside from business matters, he managed the accreditation of the district by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, developed and

implemented an innovative competency testing program at the high school, developed a kindergarten through 12th grade health education program, developed a K-8 art education program, and a host of other instructional programs.

DUKE WILLIAMS, Brighton's acting superintendent, had praise for his assistant.

"I think he'll make a terrific superintendent. He's a leader by nature and experience," Williams said. "The things he has done here... I don't think you'll find a person better prepared."



Michael Shbler, new superintendent

Jack store move is step closer

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Although tax-exempt bonds issued through Farmington's latest Economic Development Corp. have yet to be sold for a proposed shopping center, the estimated \$5.4 million project is moving closer to reality.

The long-delayed shopping center would allow the Farmer Jack supermarket to move from downtown Farmington to the corner of Nine Mile and Farmington roads. A Purrty drug store also will be featured in the new center.

"They haven't sold bonds yet, but they have found interim financing," said City Manager Robert Deadman, referring to the Weatherford-Walker developers.

Interim financing will allow the Farmington Hills developers to begin construction on the proposed shopping center, Deadman said.

The sale of bonds most likely will be completed when construction is finished, he added.

ALTHOUGH A spokesman for Weatherford-Walker said the firm is unable to provide details of the project, some leases for the smaller stores have been signed.

Meanwhile, Deadman said he believes the downtown Farmer Jack "probably will be converted to another retail use."

timetable is scheduled, Deadman guessed, construction would begin sometime this summer.

The shopping plan, recently dubbed the Farmington Crossroads Center, is the Farmington EDC's first project.

Last year, the EDC board approved Weatherford-Walker's request for tax-exempt bonds to finance the shopping center.

Designed under state law to stimulate economic growth, Farmington's EDC may issue bonds to finance or reimburse the cost of commercial or industrial projects.

With an EDC, a developer can finance projects, including building and equipment replacement, at a reduced cost because the purchase of the EDC-issued bonds is exempt from paying state or federal taxes on the interest earned.

Unlike tax-exempted certificates, Deadman said, EDC bonds do not let firms off the hook for taxes other than on interest earned.

Although issued by the EDC, the bonds must be sold by the developer to a lending institution, such as an insurance company, savings and loan or bank.

"At no point is the city liable or has any obligation to the bonds' purchaser should the developer default. The city has no obligation for the principal or the interest on the bonds."

what's inside

Agenda	6A
Community Calendar	4B
Editorials	7A
Inside Angles	5A
Obituaries	2A
Shopping Cart	1B-5B
Sports	section C
Subscription	4A, 6B

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