

# Farmington Observer

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Twenty-Five Cents

## Newcomer leads the pack in trustee tally 'Challenge kids'

By Steve Barnaby  
editor

James Abernethy sees an educational mandate in his first place finish for the Farmington School Board.

"The board has heard a strong statement from the public," said the engineering professor as the votes were tallied Monday evening at Farmington Hills City Hall.

"They (the public) would like to see their children's potential challenged," he said.

Throughout the campaign, Abernethy has hammered away at the theme of offering a bigger challenge to students.

The first-time candidate placed tops in a field of five with 528 votes. His vote count surpassed incumbent Helen Prutow who garnered 750 votes. Both will serve four-year terms.

A professor at Lawrence Institute of Technology, Abernethy feels strongly about upgrading graduation standards in the district. He also believes that public education must be coplanet of competition from private schools.

To meet these challenges, the 44-year-old Farmington planning commissioner wants to deal with what he believes are inequalities within the district. "There is an unequalness of opportunity," he said. "In some buildings the program function well. In others they just sputter along. This troubles a lot of

parents."

Although Abernethy has professed to being satisfied with the present board, he does little to disguise his displeasure with some of the present practices within the district.

"I think we have to be very, very careful before we say everything's perfect because there are some classes where there is not a lot expected," he said in a recent interview.

Abernethy would like to see teachers retrained who because of layoffs have been forced to teach subjects with which they are unfamiliar.

PRUTOW joined with Abernethy in stressing an upgrading of the graduation requirements within the district.

But to do this, she said, additional help will have to be given to some students.

"Some kids will need extra help with reading," said the two-term trustee. "I would like to concentrate on remedial reading in my next term."

She believes that math, now a two-year required course, should be upgraded to three years. English, she says, should be required for four years instead of the now mandated three years. She sees science as a two-year mandate program, rather than the present one year.

"But the kids are going to have to have a little help. I don't want to see the less academically able get out," she said.



Chickering (left) remains at the helm of Farmington. His attempts to win a seat on the school board, (left) city Hall were Tom Buck (left), who lost in and top vote-getter James Abernethy.

## Prutow takes a second

By Steve Barnaby  
editor

First-time candidate James Abernethy overwhelmed the opposition this week, taking the top spot in the Farmington school trustee election.

Wanting three of the four precincts, the college professor outdistanced second-place finisher incumbent Helen Prutow by 133 votes. Abernethy received 528 votes, while Prutow received 750. Each will serve a four-year term.

Placing a distant third was FTA activist Roxanne Fitzpatrick with 422 votes. Jaycee Tom Buck received 418 votes, while elementary school teacher Edmund Starrett received 283.

A total 1,541 voters turned out for this year's school board election. Abernethy showed overwhelming strength in three precincts. As expected, Abernethy won his

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## Budget falls prey to bickering of council political factions

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

After being immersed in a game of political one-upmanship for two weeks, the Farmington Hills City Council settled on a 8.0 millage limit for the 1984-85 budget.

The millage rate was an outright rejection of the proposed city budget requiring 8.2 mills recommended by the city manager's office.

The action was prompted by an "alternative" budget proposed by Mayor Charles Williams at last week's public hearing.

The 2-mill cut, amounting to \$200,000, spelled the end of an anticipated data processing system by the administration.

But with a \$15-million budget under consideration, the \$200,000 was a secondary consideration in the ongoing battle between Williams and Council member Joan Dudley.

THE FINAL vote on the millage was 5-2. Supporting the 8.0 rate were Williams, and council members Joe Alkatech, Robert Amovlar, Jan Dolan, and Jody Soranen. Opposed were council members Joan Dudley and Donn Wolf.

Wolf, a supporter of the Voters' Choice tax proposal, refused to support any council-mandated tax increase. He prefers that a millage increase be put on the ballot.

"I am going to vote against both budgets," Wolf said.

*'I object vehemently about backing down from the original budget proposal. I can't believe that we can't have faith in the city administration.'*

— Joan Dudley  
council member

Dudley came at it from another angle.

"I object vehemently about backing down from the original budget proposal (based on 8.2 mills)," Dudley said, adding that the "main issue is the timing of the capital improvement program."

"I can't believe that we can't have faith in the city administration," Dudley said.

Underlining much of the council's debate was what council members, particularly Williams, call the "council's feeling" that in November they will ask voters to pay additional millage to build a police building as well as to pay for other capital improvements.

Williams said the decision of whether to put the question of additional millage on the November ballot will be decided in about two weeks.

ON TUESDAY, the mayor said that the decision between the 8.2 mill and 8.0 mill budgets was one of credibility

with the taxpayers.

Williams also said that the 8 mills budget would be tight if voters turn down a request for additional millage for capital improvements. But he added that the city should be leaning for "all the things we have to do and don't levy for surplus."

The city maintains about 10 percent of its revenue in surplus, Williams said. Anything that is surplus beyond that, he said, is "just accumulating monies. Then we are assessing the people too much money."

Dudley disagreed. Charging that the council was afraid to go with the administrator's recommended 8.2 mills because of a "possible no vote in November," Dudley said, "then they shouldn't be the administration."

Angered because Williams referred to his "alternative" budget discussed last week, Dudley, a member of the city's charter commission, told the mayor that the city's founders intended to keep budget administration within the bounds of the city manager's office.

Outgoing City Manager Larry Savage, supported that contention.

"This is a very critical area between the manager and the council," Savage said.

Explaining himself, Savage told council that the administrators recommended laying 8.3 mills "because we felt it best for the city." The political decisions are the prerogative of the council. The recommendation was

what was necessary to get the job done."

The political decision facing council, Savage said, was a decision to stick with the recommended 8.2 mills or with 8 mills and later in November ask voters for additional millage for a proposed police building and capital improvements.

"Whichever way you go with these alternatives we can get the job done," Savage said.

CONTINUING HERE argument that funding must be built up for needed capital improvements, Dudley admonished council for avoiding its responsibilities.

"The name of the game ladies and gentlemen is leadership. And I think its time you showed it," Dudley said.

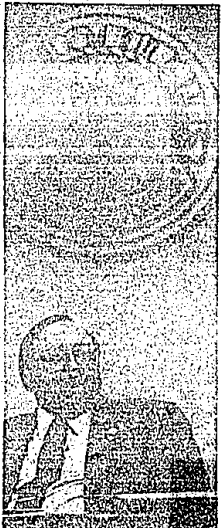
Providing the audience Monday with an unofficial vote of the probable outcome of the budget discussion, Williams occasionally noted the impending tie between those in favor of the 8 mills budget and those against.

But as the discussion continued, Alkatech became the undependable vote.

At first arguing in favor of a 8.2 mill budget, Alkatech said the difference between the two budgets is not "just a tremendous savings for the taxpayers."

"I'm making a plea to those who have indicated an 8.2 mill budget and think about the implications," Alkatech said.

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Holding his ground during the tax debate was Farmington Hills Mayor Charles Williams.



Making a point was the mayor's political sparring partner, Councilmember Joan Dudley.

### oral quarrel

#### How do you feel about hiring decision?

This week the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an employer cannot reject the job of a minority applicant as the expense of hiring a more qualified white applicant.

OFIT (Office of Fairness and Opportunity) is a national organization that is working to end the "last hired, first fired" practice which will set back equal rights and job opportunities for blacks and women.

Today's Great General question is: What do you think about the Supreme Court decision? Write your answer on the card and mail it to OFIT, P.O. Box 1000, 1000 1st St., New York, N.Y. 10017. We'll be glad to answer to see how your neighbors feel about this question. Look in Monday's Farmington Observer.

### what's inside

- Chh. Council
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### CREATIVE LIVING

MEET THE AUTHOR

WILLIAMSON WILSON

WILLIAMSON WILSON

### Woman found dead, victim of cirrhosis

Police have determined that Callahan died of natural causes, most likely cirrhosis of the liver, according to Farmington police.

When Callahan was found, an unopened fifth of vodka was also in the car, according to police. Detective had empty bottles of beer and vodka in articles of clothing were also found, police believe Callahan was living in her car.

A T.J. Marx security guard told police she saw what was believed to be Callahan's car drive through the parking lot at about 2 p.m.