

Dibert challenges 3 incumbents

BY TIM SMITH
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For the first time in years, the Farmington City Council election will be contested.

In the Nov. 2 general election for three seats, council incumbents Bill Hartsock, JoAnne McShane and James Mitchell will face Stephen Dibert, a veteran of two recent state races.

The last election in which voters had any choice to make was in 1993.

"We need to have a debate in this city (about) the future of this town," Dibert said Thursday. "It's time we had that."

McShane, a 10-year veteran of the council, applauded Dibert entering the campaign.

"To me, it will make it livelier," said McShane of the contested race. "I go around door-to-



Steve Dibert,

door and discuss the issues anyway, and I don't see anything wrong with a good debate."

Last year, Dibert ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic candidate for the 37th District state House seat against GOP candidate Andrew Razzkowski.

The Farmington council race is nonpartisan. But Dibert isn't concerned about that, nor is he worried about not trying for a state office.

"There's more you can do at a local level," said Dibert, adding that he currently does not have

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JoAnne McShane
—Incumbent

aspirations for the House.

Farmington's 7,600 registered voters will elect the three top vote-getters to the council and also will decide several city charter amendments.

Among amendments is one about whether to change the current three-year residency requirement for elected and appointed officials, said city clerk Patsy Cantrell.

Hartsock, McShane, Mitchell and Dibert all took out and returned their nominating petitions by the 5 p.m. Friday deadline. They have until 4 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 18, to withdraw from the election, Cantrell said.

The top two vote-getters will win four-year terms, while the third-place finisher will win a two-year stint.

To file for the election, candidates needed to obtain signatures from 60-to-76 registered voters.

Police ratify pact

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Leas talk has led to a longer contract between the city of Farmington Hills and the union representing police officers.

Farmington Hills Police Officers Association ratified a six-year pact that includes annual 3-percent pay increases — 18 percent over the life of the contract. Labor agreements typically run three years.

City and police union negotiators needed only four months to reach a settlement, which resulted in a tentative agreement July 14 — two weeks after the previous contract expired June 30. In the past, contract negotiations have lasted anywhere from one to two years.

The new deal runs through June 2005. Both sides say the contract provides security.

"What both sides are buying into is stability and labor peace," said Dana Whinnery, Hills assistant city manager. Instead of focusing on smaller issues that "muddy the waters," association spokesman John Markey said both sides concentrated on six to seven core issues.

"This time around, it was an extremely smooth process," said Markey, who works as a Hills police undercover officer.

Pension increases and consistent pay raises highlight the latest contract.

Also, maximum pension benefits increase from 70 percent to 75 percent of final average salary starting July 2002.

The pension multiplier increases to 2.8 across the board, which is multiplied by years service. An officer would have to work 90 years in order to receive the maximum pension.

Starting July 2000, officers can retire after 25 years of service regardless of age. Previously, an officer had to be age 50 and work 25 years before retiring.

Officers increase their contribution from 5 to 6 percent toward pension.

Farmington Hills association's membership is a mixture of veteran officers and recent hires, Markey said.

"I think there is something for everyone in this contract, regardless of age," Markey said.

Other terms included an increase in prescription copays from \$5 to \$10. Both sides agreed to a sick leave control and incentive program, which starts in January.

Final appeals for grievances regarding disciplinary layoffs will be handled through binding arbitration instead. As a result, the Police Appeal Board will be disbanded.

Farmington Hills City Council unanimously approved the contract at its Aug. 9 meeting.

Store patron is \$4,000 wealthier for \$1 ticket

There is one Farmington woman whose pride in her town as she makes her way around the downtown area.

Last week, a regular customer of the Cigar Emporium in the Downtown Farmington Center bought a winning "In the Chips" state lottery ticket at the store.

Cigar Emporium owner Tom Petros said the woman, in

her 40s, already cashed in her \$1 ticket for a prize of \$4,000.

According to Petros, the prize winner asked to not have her name publicly revealed.

"She doesn't want all kinds of people asking her for money," said Petros, who also owns the adjoining Wine Emporium.

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