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Fifteen Cents

Contracts hampering budget cuts

By SUSAN AVERILL

FARMINGTON—Working with sheer numbers in budget cutting is like trying to steer around the peak of an iceberg, the Farmington board of education discovered Monday.

In a special study session called Monday night for the school board's review of the projected 1975-76 district budget, board members found many of their money-saving suggestions invalid due to unforeseen contractual arrangements.

Included in cuts suggested, but stipulated in various contracts, was an allowance for the reimbursement of teachers who earned extra credit hours, substitute teachers and travel expenses.

Other proposed cuts included the entire Cycle IX program, board members' salaries, the B-1 schedule, new bus purchases, teaching aides, secretaries and other office personnel. Business Manager William C. Prisk pointed out that reimbursement for travel expenses and extra credit hours could not arbitrarily be trimmed from the budget, as they were negotiated items in teacher contracts.

QUALIFIED SUBSTITUTE teachers were needed to fulfill the number of education hours required per student by state law, he said.

Board President Gary L. Lichtman proposed the most extensive cuts including Cycle IX and board salaries, thereby hoping to save additional money while restoring non-aides and field trips to the budget, as well as 12 reading specialists, metrics programs and additional books and supplies.

Embezzlement sentencing due

FARMINGTON HILLS — Frances Lane, former secretary to the director of public safety, pleaded guilty Tuesday to embezzling funds from the police department.

Mrs. Lane is to be sentenced March 17 by Oakland County Circuit Judge Farrell Roberts.

A lengthy departmental investigation into the missing funds, said to be at least \$700, began a year ago. The funds were from the police records bureau.

Mrs. Lane was employed as an administrative assistant in Director Ronald Holko's office at the time of her arrest.

Ed Sosnick, assistant Oakland County prosecutor in charge of the case, said he received word of the plea change Friday.

Maximum penalty on the charge is 10 years in prison. Mrs. Lane also could be required to make restitution.

Lopping Cycle IX would add an additional \$31,396 to the skeleton budget, he estimated. He was quick to defend the quality of the program, which includes 15 interns from Oakland University at three Title I schools, but said that Farmington students should take precedence over teachers.

Travel expenses were questioned by some board members who were told that these were contract provisions.

"Most of the travel teachers do is in the district. Relatively little of it is outside of the boundaries," Prisk said.

Lichtman discovered his suggestion to reduce the number of plant operations secretaries from two to one, using federal funds to pay the one remaining, was foiled by seniority laws.

Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) funds could only be used to pay one secretary. Since she was the last one hired, she would be the first laid off, Prisk explained. The funds could not then be applied toward the salary of the first secretary.

Prisk and board secretary Emma S. Makinen recommended a complete two-week shutdown of all Farmington district schools between terms. Electricity, heating, maintenance and busing costs could be substantially lowered by such a move, Prisk said. The end of the school year would be pushed to the end of June, rather than the middle of the month, he said.

MARKININ, Lichtman and trustee Dr. Mervyn Ross suggested the relocation of graduation ceremonies from Ford Auditorium to individual high school gymnasiums and auditoriums. More local and less expensive speakers should be found for commencement exercises.

Although they hoped to save the entire \$10,000 graduation allotment, Prisk said only \$3,000-\$5,000 might be saved by such an action.

Advocating reduction in counselors, maintenance and busing, Makinen asked that no further cuts be made in the curriculum or in programs "that affect the students academically."

She advocated the restoration of secondary reading specialists, classroom teachers for academic subjects and outdoor education while limiting overtime to emergencies only.

Three of the four men on the board, including Lichtman, Ross and William Corliss, juggled figures for the additions and deletions they desired. Board Treasurer William Gravus was satisfied with the projected budget as drawn by Prisk and the school administration and advocated its acceptance without alteration.



David Moffet is Captain Comic. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

C.C. joins comic super heroes

By JUDY OWEN

Pow. Sock. Crash SHAZAAAAAM!

Captain Comic is alive and well and spending a lot of time with his fictional friends in the basement of a Farmington store.

He's really mild-mannered David Moffet, but most of the patrons of the Comic Center at the Farmington Book Center, 3349 Grand River, call him C.C.

When he stands near the murals of the superheroes which cover two basement walls, the angular features of his face look as if he may have posed for the artist.

At one time the walls were completely visible, but the growing stock of comics — new and old — which were amassed since the store opened last summer has long since obscured them.

THE CENTER is touted by owner Al Brown as one of the best organized in the Detroit area.

Brown and C.C. peddle more than just the 25 cent variety of comics.

While they have plenty of those,

their big drawing card is behind the counter.

Carefully enclosed in specially designed plastic bags and filed in boxes are the comics that draw the collectors.

Superman, Batman, Fantastic Four, Captain Marvel, Spiderman, Wonder Woman, Plastic Man, Captain America, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck — they're all there.

AND NEARLY all of them go for a good price, C.C. said.

What makes a comic book valuable?

The artist, the book's condition and its age all figure into the price, he said.

The superhero comics first appeared in 1939 when Batman cracked, crashed and socked his way into Detective Comics as "a mysterious and adventurous figure, fighting for righteousness and apprehending the wrongdoer, in his lone battle against the evil forces of society."

BEFORE THAT time, comic magazines were mainly devoted to reprints of newspaper comics.

Until the early 1960s, comic books went for 10 cents. But in rapid succession the prices jumped to 12 cents, 15 cents and finally 25 cents.

Collectors' taste in comics vary. Some prefer the romances, some the superheroes, some the Disney and other humorous characters and some the early Mad Magazines which satirized the comics.

"AGE DOESN'T make any difference," C.C. said. "Older people like the nostalgia. Younger people like to read them, and the middle-aged collectors seek a combination of the two."

C.C., a collector since the middle 1960s, said that the best part of his job is hearing patrons talk of their experiences in acquiring favorite comics.

He told of one who had a friend on the Detroit garbage crew. The man found a box of comics sitting out with the trash and, instead of dumping it in the truck, saved it for his friend.

The box contained a first edition Superman comic which at conventions draws \$1,000-\$3,000.

COMIC ENTHUSIASTS popped up about 10 years ago.

They scour the garage sales and rummage sales, trek from convention to convention and swap with other collectors.

Collecting grew through the letters sections of the comics themselves. Steve Charochak and Gail Ratliff of Livonia are regular customers at the center.

Both 17 years old, they show up like clockwork each Tuesday and Friday to look over recent acquisitions.

CHAROCHAK has about 2,000 comics in his collection.

A comic enthusiast since he was four, he began his collection when he was 13.

Mrs. Ratliff began her collection in 1972. She restricts it to Kamandi, The Last Boy on Earth, and OMAC, One-Man Army Corps.

If comics aren't enough for the ardent collector, there are posters featuring the superheroes of Frank Rosta and the Star Trek crew.

\$2.4 million price tag

Farmington eyes new storm drain

FARMINGTON—Drivers on city streets could soon face more than snowy roads when they venture out.

Under a program approved by city council Tuesday night, several streets may be torn up for construction of a new sewer system.

The new system is designed to eliminate the overflow into the Upper Rouge River caused by heavy rains.

Farmington's sewer now handles both storm and sanitary wastes. Under the new plan, a separate drain system would be constructed for storm runoff, leaving the original sewers for sanitary use only.

CITY MANAGER Robert Deadman said federal and state environmental legislation make solving the overflow problem essential.

City engineer Frank Papke estimated the cost of the project at \$2.3 million.

Deadman said 75 percent of the \$2.3 million may be funded through federal grants.

City councilmen voted to apply for a grant from the State Department of

Natural Resources for funding on phase one of the project.

That phase includes a comprehensive study and investigation into the extent of the runoff problem in Farmington.

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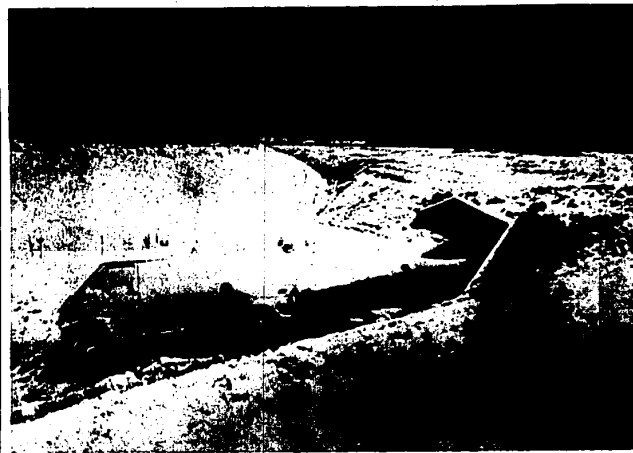
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Bad driving weather

Snow-covered roads are a continuing nuisance in both cities. This panel truck was traveling near the expressway when it hit an embankment and

slid off the roadway. Service station attendants worked for more than one hour to pull the vehicle back onto the road. (Photo by Craig Newman)



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