

Fire study group chooses cooperation over merger

More cooperation between seven area fire departments, rather than a merger, would benefit area residents. This was the result of a study of a proposal to unite fire departments to reduce inefficiencies and offer better service.

The report was made by Public Administration Service (PAS) of Chicago which studied the feasibility of merging seven area departments into one unit.

Area-wide cooperation would be "more politically acceptable," said Steve Lloyd of PAS, because of the reluctance of some communities to give up their independent departments, even at a savings in cost.

Of the communities considered, which include Farmington, Farmington Hills, Commerce, Walled Lake,

Wixom and Novi, West Bloomfield came out the best but still measured short in a number of areas.

West Bloomfield Twp. Supervisor John N. Doherty commented, "We weren't surprised at the report which showed our records aren't the best," adding that fire and police dispatchers who handle calls are working on problems.

No meeting has been called by Farmington Hills which initiated the study, at a cost of \$14,500 of which West Bloomfield paid \$3,640.

DOHERTY HAS for years lamented the waste of duplication of equipment and buildings and argued in many cases that response to fire calls could be speeded up if the nearest station could be called initially. At present,

other community stations respond to a local call only if asked.

The PAS report substantiates Doherty's point but leans toward a tighter mutual aid agreement which would allow cooperation without the individual municipalities losing control within their own borders.

Of West Bloomfield's five fire stations, only Station No. 1 on Orchard Lake Road rated "good" as to its condition. The other four were rated fair or poorer and were said to be inadequately located.

PAS rated the present township stations as follows:

•Station No. 1, Orchard Lake Road near Lane Pine—good condition, well designed and spacious.

•No. 2, Walnut Lake and Belgrave roads—fair condition, small and unsuitable.

•No. 3, Green Lake and Commerce roads—poor condition, satisfactory but little room for expansion.

•No. 4, Allendale and Algonquin—poor condition, poor location, inadequate size and unsuitable.

•No. 5, Naylor south of Cooley Lake Road—fair condition, inadequate size, poor location and unsuitable.

PAS calls for a new station near Green and Hiller roads which could replace three existing inadequate stations and it also calls for a station near West Maple and Middlebelt with a possible station in the southwest part of the township.

Another possibility would be near Maple and Drake.

Response time currently averaged 2.4 minutes per mile traveled in the township. The longest response time has been 23 minutes.

WEST BLOOMFIELD is the only one of the seven communities studied which is considering an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system. For that, PAS recommends the exploration of an outside contracting service, which the township is doing with Paramed Inc. Paramed would charge the township \$300,000 a year for services of 14 trained EMS technicians and two vehicles.

New Lutheran Church to hold dedication

The newly formed Hope Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills will begin holding weekly worship services at 10:15 a.m., Sunday, March 6, in the University Hills Christian Center, 26705 Farmington Road.

The Rev. Victor Mesenbring, who serves as pastor to the congregation, will conduct the service and dedicate the University Hills education building for use as a worship center for the group.

A Sunday school hour begins at 9 a.m. each Sunday with classes for all ages, beginning with three-year-olds. The public is invited to attend.

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