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Twenty-Five Cents

Proposed city budget nets taxpayers' relief

By LYNN ORR

City of Farmington taxes will remain at their present level of 11 mills next year, says City Mgr. Robert Deadman, who submitted the proposed \$2 million 1977-78 budget to the city council last week.

"The recommended budget will not require a tax increase to meet anticipated revenues," says Deadman, who projects a nine per cent increase in state shared revenues.

"We're guessing what they actually will give us, but if the economy stays healthy, we expect to receive about \$35,000 from the state," Deadman says.

Recent reassessments on Farmington property have boosted tax revenues to about \$1 million, a seven per cent increase over last year's tax revenues.

Total expenditures over last year's budget of \$1,800,000 increased about 15 per cent to slightly more than \$2 million. More than half of the increase is attributed to maintenance of public safety services and increased costs in insurance, says Deadman.

"A new three-year work agreement was negotiated between the city and the public safety officers," Deadman explains. "This new agreement, as well as the increased cost of main-

tenance and equipment, will result this year in a 8.3 per cent increase in the cost of providing police and fire services.

"Insurance costs have increased since 1975 from \$12,000 to a projected \$40,000 in the coming year."

The Public Safety Department budget, about 30 per cent of the city's total budget, increased by about \$50,000 to a proposed figure of \$652,000.

Public services, approximately 25 per cent of the total budget, increased by about 28 per cent to a total of \$513,000. Almost half of the increase, however, is the additional \$42,000 relegated to the recreation department budget.

"If we set up our own department the first year, the operation will cost about \$60,000, but we will collect revenues in the amount of \$35,400 from the people who participate in the program," Deadman explains.

"Out of the pocket of Farmington taxpayers comes about \$24,600, or about the same as last year's budget."

MAINTAINING OPERATIONS is the goal of the proposed budget, Deadman says, although he has submitted a recommendation to improve one area of city services—the leaf pickup program.

"The present program was intended to be a supplemental service provided to our residents in lieu of bagging the leaves for normal rubbish pickup," Deadman says.

"We believe the present system, which uses one vacuum-type machine, provides a very low level of service which should be improved. The department of public services receives many citizens' complaints relative to the slowness of the service provided."

The proposed improvement, the purchase of one new leaf machine to be operated by CETA (Comprehensive

Employment Training Act) employees (federally-paid) or temporary employees, would allow the city to make at least two pickups throughout the city within a 30-day period each fall, Deadman says.

Farmington City Library received a 10 per cent increase to \$103,000 in next year's budget.

"The increase is necessary, as the Farmington library system's book circulation is the third highest in the Detroit metropolitan area," Deadman says. "This increase in usage has placed a great deal of pressure on the current book collection, which is

badly in need of expansion and replacement."

Also, the library, in conjunction with the city, plans to construct a parking lot on the south side of State Street across from the library building.

"This project will be a joint project, with the cost shared equally by the library and the city," he says.

Approximately 26 parking spaces are expected to be provided in the lot, which will accommodate employees working in the civic center as well as residents using city facilities.

Approximately \$4,000 has been allotted to update and recodify the city code, last edited in 1973. About 115 changes in the code are projected because 70 new or amended ordinances have been enacted since the code's last printing.

The budget allotment allows for the printing of 300 new code books as well.

A public hearing on the proposed budget is scheduled for 8 p.m., May 11, at city hall. Farmington City Council is expected to adopt next year's budget before May 17 in accordance with the city charter.



Eat your heart out, Tom Sawyer

Frank Firek relaxes in the sun and dips his leader into the river in hopes of catching a few big ones before anyone else gets the idea.

Farmington City Park had its share of sun lovers last week as the warm weather spell continued. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Lobbyists want watchdog law in Farmington

Farmington Hills residents could find themselves working to pass a local conflict of interest ordinance if the Michigan Citizens Lobby is successful in its attempt to organize them.

The Citizens Lobby hopes to convince enough Oakland County cities to pass local ordinances to combat opposition to a state conflict of interest law, according to Lobby co-director Doug Ross.

Farmington Hills residents interested in working to pass a local ordinance can meet with Citizens Lobby at 8 p.m., April 20, in the lobby of the Alexander Hamilton Building, Twelve Mile and Farmington Road, Farmington Hills.

The ordinance would prohibit city employees or officials from using their positions for personal gain. The Citizens Lobby ordinance contains a financial disclosure section that would require local officials to reveal business interests which could put them in conflict of interest during their time in office, according to Ross.

Public officials would be prohibited from using confidential information received through their elected position to further their private finances under the proposed ordinance.

OFFICIALS WOULD BE required to exclude themselves from participating in decisions which would give extra financial benefits to their families or businesses.

"If a person's business deals with the city, the official can't vote in a decision which concerns it," Ross said.

City personnel, resources and property can be used for city purposes, only. Officials are prohibited from using them to conduct their private business, under the proposal.

An official who is out of office will be required to wait one year before he or she can act as a paid attorney before the government body of which he was a member.

Public officials will be prohibited from taking gifts and bribes under the ordinance.

Some of the opposition to the ordinance is centered on the mistaken belief that the citizens think they're dishonest, according to Ross.

"That's not true. If they were all crooks they wouldn't pass this ordinance," Ross said. "We're not assuming they're crooked."

CRITICS OF THE STATE conflict of interest ordinance argue that its passage would scare wealthy persons from running for office, according to Ross.

We just want to know if their business interests as it relates to the city. Records of property are already public, we just want to know the location of that property. We want to know what business interests a man has to see if his business would have close dealing with city officials. If that's true, then we'd know that he'd have to exclude himself from some decisions," he said.

Opponents fear that such an ordinance would cause many officials to resign, Ross said.

"In California, where a similar ordinance was passed, only 60 local officials resigned and of those 60, 46 were land use and zoning commission members," Ross said.

In order to ensure that the ordinance would be obeyed, a citizen's ethics committee would be formed, according to Ross. The Farmington

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Youth, adults split on weed law

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Although their elders and some of their peers disapprove, many of the under-30 age group in the West Bloomfield, Farmington and Southfield area seem to favor the legalization of marijuana.

While opponents of the weed are afraid that it will harm the smoker's health and lead to harder drugs, supporters are anxious to reap the benefits of government control through legalization.

Besides ending the plight of young adults who are convicted for possessing one marijuana cigarette and must carry the lifelong stigma of a police record, legalization would discourage dishonest dealers, according to proponents.

"The government could make money from marijuana if it wanted to," said Lisa Surkin, 16, of West Bloomfield. "With government control, there would be fewer dealers and they wouldn't put chemicals in marijuana. Now, some dealers treat it with harder drugs."

"The government could make lots



of money if they'd tax pot like they do liquor," added Jeff Kraus, 17, of Southfield, who was playing pinball in Farmington Hills.

"RIGHT NOW, the government isn't making money on it and that's what they're mad about," he said. Currently, area smokers say that an ounce of good grade marijuana can cost between \$25-45.

With government regulation, supporters hope that quality will increase and prices decrease.

"There wouldn't be a black market," said Steve, 21, of Farmington Hills, who preferred to have only his first name used.

"With government regulation, the quality would increase. There wouldn't be as many rip-offs. The government could tax a joint like they do cigarettes. And right now, the kids are getting it anyway," he said.

Government regulation could keep youngsters from dipping into hard drugs and being introduced to criminal activities, according to supporters.

"Right now, the situation breeds crime. It gets the kids in a situation where they're introduced to other drugs that they shouldn't be introduced to," said Harry Levine, 30, of Detroit.

"The situation, now, is similar to the Prohibition era. No one will stop using marijuana. If it continues to be illegal, it's like burying your head in the sand."

"IT'S BEEN USED for years in many cultures without effect," he added.

Supporters also noted that young adults who are convicted for possessing marijuana carry the record with them for the rest of their lives.

"A lot of kids get busted for one joint. They have a record that affects their jobs. And all for one stupid joint," said Ms. Surkin.

Some of the opposition to legalization is fed by misinformation, according to proponents.

"People smoke it anyway. Pot is less harmful than alcohol. And alcohol is legal," said Patty Hull, 14, of West Bloomfield.

"Alcohol is more dangerous than pot," said Larry Elias, 24, of Farmington Hills.

"It doesn't cause anyone to be

rowdy," said Bill Wells, 18, of Farmington Hills.

"No one goes to jail for rowdiness on pot," agreed Elias.

The availability of marijuana disturbs some persons.

"As a family man, I believe that if it could be picked up from a vending machine, it would be too accessible," said Alfred Dinverno, owner of the Fun Factory, Farmington.

Fire kills 2 Sunday

Two men died Sunday in a house fire in southern Farmington Hills, one of two blazes which firefighters battled yesterday.

The first fire, at 21545 Randall between Freedom and Eight Mile, was reported at 5:51 a.m. Fire-fighting personnel from two of the four volunteer fire units in the Hills fought the early morning blaze.

Upon reaching the scene, fire officials found the two men in the home. The names are being withheld until relatives are notified.

The second fire was reported at approximately 3 p.m. at 33631 Colfax, between Eight and Nine Mile, west of Farmington Road.

According to officials, the house on Colfax was being refurbished and was unoccupied at the time of the blaze. No injuries were reported.

Hand appointed to court committee

By LYNN ORR

As one of eight members appointed to the Michigan Judicial Planning Committee, Farmington 4th District Court Judge Michael Hand hopes the committee will be able to accomplish its task—accelerating the current snail's pace of the courts.

"Our purpose will be to come up with some answers to the problems posed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court," Hand says.

"And from what I understand thus far, we're going to try to improve and streamline the entire court system."

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas G. Cavanagh created the committee in accordance with the Judicial Control Act of 1976. The committee's first meeting is scheduled for early May, and Hand sees the work ahead as "kind of an efficiency study."

"One phase of the work will probably deal with the backlog of cases, and why certain courts are overwhelmed and others are not."

"Most district and circuit courts are

pretty well up-to-date, but Wayne County Circuit Court is three years behind, and Records' Court is incredibly backlogged."

"IF CASES get dragged on for too long, witnesses fade, memories fade and things disappear," Hand explains. "We'll be trying to implement a number of things to deal with these problems."

Hand expects a newly-devised judicial reporting system to solve some of the problems when it goes into effect this July.

"Reports will go to the supreme court administrator so he'll be able to see where the case loads are building up. He'll then be able to consult with the presiding judge and bring in a judge from another area with less congestion."

Computers and microfilms will also be an efficiency aspect of court procedures in the future, Hand predicts; and implementing computerization will be another facet of the committee's work.

"Computerizing the ordinance and criminal decisions of the courts

should move the cases faster, but the civil division will take some extensive work," he says.

"We will be studying how to implement these types of things."

Hand also believes the committee will be studying ways to achieve uniformity throughout the state in sentencing.

"Criminal crimes are dealt with in one way in one area of the state and differently in another," he explains. "We'd like to see the borders narrowed so the variance isn't as great in setting punishment for a crime."

HAND BELIEVES judges tend to become insulated in a community, and furnishing information to the supreme court administrator to get an overview of the state's judicial system will improve the overall performance of the courts.

Serving on the committee is an honor, Hand says, and he's pleased with the appointment.

"I was very pleased and glad that the chief justice imposed such confidence in me," he says. No end date

was established for members' terms, he adds. "We're appointed to serve at the chief justice's pleasure."

Judge Hand was elected associate municipal judge for the City of Farmington in 1964; municipal judge in 1966; and district judge in 1968. He has served as chairman of the rules committee of the Michigan District Judges Association, and he was the only judge of 166 district judges selected to receive the award in 1970 for outstanding service as head of the rules committee.

Presently serving in the 47th District Court, Judge Hand has been a Farmington resident for 22 years.

Serving with him on the Michigan Judicial Planning Committee will be Judge Michael P. Cavanagh, chairman, representing the court of appeals; Judge Theodore R. Bohn, circuit court; Judge Robert L. Drake, probate court; Judge James H. Lincoln, probate court, juvenile division; Robert F. Leonard, prosecuting attorneys; James R. Neuhard, defense attorneys and public defenders; and Einar Bollin, court administrators.

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MONDAY IS OPINION DAY

Don't just sit there twiddling around. Get reaching for those hors d'oeuvres. Skip that cup of tea. Monday is the day the Farmington Observer staff does more than just expose a crackerbarrel debate. For reaching that runs the gamut from the ridiculous humor of Tinker-Around to the thoughtful and funny observations of Hors d'oeuvres and Crackerbarrel Debate, turn to Page 8A.