

They like tax cut

Beverly budget pleases residents

By JOE MARTUCCI

No one complained Monday at a well-attended public hearing on Beverly Hills new budget. The village council plans to cut the tax rate.

Residents, apparently pleased at the prospect of a tax cut, asked only a few general questions on the spending plan. There was even praise for the village council.

"I would like to commend the council for utilizing surplus funds and highly encourage you to do the same next year if you can without entering into an operational deficiency," said homeowner Richard Maxwell.

Following the hearing, council members adopted the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 as proposed and set the tax rate at 8.5 mills. This consists of 6.5 mills for the general fund, 1.5 mills for roads and 0.5 mills for drains. A mill is \$1 in taxes for each \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The local tax levy was reduced from

10 mills this year and 11.75 mills in 1976-77. The 1.5-mill, or 15 per cent, rate reduction should result in tax savings of about \$33 for a house assessed at \$50,000. Property in Beverly Hills received a 10 per cent assessment hike this year.

One minor amendment was made to include \$20,400 in unexpected federal revenue sharing money in the budget. This is being passed through to Beverly Hills by Southfield Township.

IN ALL, the township is giving the village \$47,000 in federal funds. Councilman Robert Stansberry said enabled the village to reduce the millage rate.

New services provided for in the budget include \$100,000 to begin a long-range Rouge River cleanup program and engineering work on water main improvements.

There is also increased emphasis on local road repairs. This budget is increased from \$143,000 to \$376,000 due

to a \$100,000 general fund transfer and property tax revenues.

The budget also provides for continuing the village's current contract with the Baldwin Library for library services. Contract costs will increase, however, from \$53,800 to \$65,000. A \$10 fee charged to residents for library cards has been eliminated.

As approved, the budget contains general fund expenditures of \$1.9 million. This includes \$1 million for public safety, \$473,750 for public works, \$238,075 for general government and \$46,500 for parks and recreation. This year's general fund is \$1.75 million.

Other spending plans include \$303,495 for major roads, \$376,400 for local roads, \$153,477 for interest on debts, \$126,100 for capital projects, such as the Rouge cleanup, and \$792,600 for water and sewer.

IN BUDGET-RELATED decisions Monday, the council set special assessment costs for residents living on unpaved roads and approved sewage disposal increases, effective July 1. The special assessments for weed

cutting and dust control on gravel roads amount to \$5,649 for the whole village.

Councilman Stansberry objected to the special fee and he was joined by Councilman W. Brian Schweikart in voting against the assessment.

"Residents who live on unpaved roads are being whacked doubly for one of the few road services they receive other than snow plowing," said Stansberry.

"My contention is that dust control on unpaved roads is no different than joint sealing on concrete roads or patching on asphalt roads. This has been my contention for some time."

Other officials, however, said gravel roads are more expensive to maintain than paved roads, thus justifying the weed and dust control assessments.

The council also agreed to increase sewage disposal rates by 35 cents per 1,000 cubic feet, beginning July 1. The rate will go from \$1.40 to \$1.76.

Officials said the increase was necessary because of higher costs charged to all suburban customers by Detroit.

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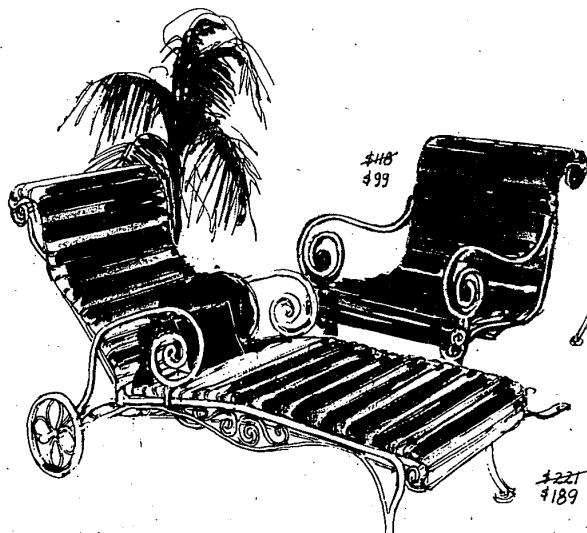
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