

Sweeping service cuts predicted with Tisch

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Farmington and Farmington Hills city officials are predicting disaster for local government services to residents if voters approve the Tisch Amendment on the Nov. 7.

To counter the possibility of a Tisch approval, the Hills city council, at this week's meeting, has imposed a hiring freeze on city employees until after the November balloting.

The freeze also was implemented to guard against expected changes in the federal regulations for hiring employ-

ees through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), according to Finance Director Girard Miller.

Under consideration by Congress is a proposal to limit the amount of time a CETA employee can work for a city and a stipulation that 50 per cent of those employees must work on short-term job projects. It could also limit annual pay to \$12,000.

Presently, both cities have CETA employees, such as police officers working in fulltime positions.

But of greatest concern is the Tisch tax plan.

"The passage of Tisch would be a

local disaster," says Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman.

"This would literally cut the heart out of city programs," he said, noting that some programs would have to be discontinued, while others would be cut back.

Deadman predicts the city would lose as much as \$400,000 out of the \$2.2 million budget if Tisch passes.

"We don't have a large welfare program in a city this small. We provide the essential services and that's about it."

Although reluctant to name programs that could come under the council's knife, Deadman says that

first to be protected would be fire and police services. Such programs as recreation, library and the senior citizen cab program would come under closer scrutiny.

Farmington Hills is looking at the possibility of a \$2.5 million budget cut.

"What that means in services you just can't predict," says Miller. "The department heads are looking at the current budgets to see where they can reduce services immediately."

Although the Tisch proposal wouldn't go into effect until the beginning of the next fiscal year, July 1, the Hills administration is trying to make some cutbacks now to make next

year's transitions easier in the event that the amendment is passed.

The Hills also is examining ways to capitalize on the revenue side of the budget. Avenues open include implementing a special millage for garbage service. Presently, the Hills picks up that cost through the general budget. Also a possibility would be to tack on a service charge for tax collection.

Deadman says the city already has a one per cent service charge for tax collection and that the amount raised for charging for other city services would be minimal.

Alternatives are tenuous for local governments, says Miller, depending

on whether both the Tisch and Headline amendments pass or if Tisch passes alone.

If only Tisch passes, the city could seek a charter amendment to increase the local tax rate to bring in more funds. But if both Tisch and Headline pass, local units would be prohibited from raising the tax limit, according to Miller.

Although pessimistic over the effects of Tisch, Deadman feels that a majority of voters won't go for it.

"The Tisch amendment is totally irresponsible. The people in this community want local services continued," says Deadman.

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Nursing home abuse—a sad fact of life

Each day at least one complaint about a nursing home in Oakland County dribbles into the office of Citizens for Better Care (CBC) in Farmington Hills.

Ensnared in a corner of Mercy Center, Robert Wainess, manager of the group's Oakland office, listens to patients and their families tell stories of abusive attendants, poor food and unsanitary living conditions.

While Wainess can only listen and observe, he realizes that for some families seeing a loved one unkempt in a thin hospital gown or laying on dirty sheets has become an unpleasant fact of life.

It's a fact of life that he and the other members of CBC have been trying to change since 1969 when the group began investigating nursing homes at the behest of the Detroit City Council.

Most of the complaints Wainess receives are repetitive. Dirty conditions, lack of exercise and its resulting bedsores are the three most common complaints his office receives.

Sometimes all three show up in one complaint.

An Oakland County woman recently complained to the CBC that her mother was in a home where exercise was non-existent, the sheets usually dirty and bedsores plagued the residents.

WAINESS estimates that she shares her plight with a large portion of nursing home residents. Most Oakland County nursing homes offer poor to mediocre care, he said.

"There are only a few homes in Oakland County which I would say provide good care. The others give mediocre or bad care," he said.

If he were faced with the decision to place his mother in one of the county's nursing homes, Wainess said he would

consider about 10 of the area's 36 facilities.

"And that's a liberal estimate," he added. "Some of those I'm counting are small nursing homes that I don't know much about and I'm just assuming they provide good care."

Wainess is the only full time administrator at the Farmington Hills office. There is another full time position usually occupied by a VISTA worker which is temporarily unfilled while the volunteer group prepares for another term.

During the last quarter, Wainess' office investigated and completed 45 cases concerned with patient care. Of these cases, 17 dealt with patient rights, such as being able to see whenever one pleases.

Another 15 cases were concerned with various other health and living complaints and 11 dealt with the condition of the food.

THE OFFICE ABSOLVED nursing homes of two additional complaints which were reported to the CBC. In each case, the homes kept within the limits of the law.

One case dealt with an elderly patient who was switched from the nursing home to a hospital. The family wanted to return the patient to the home after the hospital stay but the home's administration vetoed the idea.

If the family didn't make arrangements with the administration before the transfer, the home is within its rights to refuse re-admittance, according to Wainess.

Poor administration can hamper the operation of a nursing home, according to Wainess. Homes with habitually poor administration and continuously poor care change their standards only when they switch owners.

Other homes, with less habitual problems can be convinced to deal

with a complaint after a phone call from the CBC.

Other complaints remain unsolved and go into a file with other reports about the facility. The organization then exerts pressure on these homes through state agencies such as the Michigan Department of Health, or the departments of mental health or social services.

Legislative pressure, litigation and public action joins the pressure tactics to force the home's administration to solve the problem.

CBC INVESTIGATES each complaint it receives. In Oakland County, complaints are brought to the office by calling 476-2040.

"The only way we can discover if a complaint is worth investigating is to investigate them," Wainess said.

If the complaint wishes to remain anonymous, the CBC will protect his identity.

Although the Detroit Health Department helped the group form in 1969, CBC remains unaffiliated with the city and its departments.

Its funding comes through federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and from federal grants which usually last one year. As a result, the group is continuously applying for more money.

Other support comes from private individuals and organizations which are members of the group. Its 1,800 members pay a fee to join which helps the group. Persons more than 55 years old pay \$2. Other adults pay \$5. Organizations pay \$10.

While most of the members are senior citizens groups, other membership comes from union retiree associations, tenant organizations, church retiree groups, block clubs, professional organizations and private members.

Employees of nursing homes or owners are barred from membership.



When Papabili visited

Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (center), now known as Pope John Paul II, visited SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary and St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake twice, most recently in 1976. Pictured here with secretary Fr. Stanislaw Dziwisz (left) and Fr. Michael

Dylag of St. Mary's College, Cardinal Wojtyla made many friends and shared many experiences in the area. For more stories on the new pope, turn to page 14C.

Roman Catholics celebrate election of Polish pontiff

By PATRICIA LACROIX

Farmington area religious and Polish leaders expressed surprise over the selection of a Polish man to lead the Roman Catholic Church, the first man of that country ever to be chosen.

But the pride and surprise were tempered for the most part by wishes for success in the role.

Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, 58, of communist Poland, was named Monday to lead the church. He is the first non-Italian to be appointed in 455 years. The last non-Italian pope was Adrian VI of Holland.

He selected the name Pope John Paul II, after the previous pope who died unexpectedly after serving only 34 days.

"There has always been the possibility that a non-Italian would be named, but the probability was not strong," said Father Joseph Drogoski of St. Clare's parish in Farmington. "I feel elation, and in a sense, deep pride."

Father Drogoski said that the Polish Catholics have always been very staunch in their faith, and have traditionally not been too concerned with "puff issues" of abortion, birth control and priest celibacy, as American Catholics seem to be.

The fact that the new pope is from a Communist nation adds a new dimension to the situation. Polish Catholics have had to fight tremendous opposition in order to practice their faith, which Father Drogoski added, made them even stronger in their beliefs.

Barb Osowski of Farmington had another view of the new pope.

"They are always putting the Polish people down with jokes and other ways. This makes most people think that Polish people are not as good as other people in many ways," she said, "but one being named to the papacy has to make you think that we aren't all that bad, after all. Most people think of us as common, ordinary blue-collar laborers, but now this."

Mrs. Osowski said her mother, Rose Lubarski of Hamtramck, was especially pleased to hear the announcement. She had met the new pope when



BARBARA OSOWSKI

he was visiting the state in 1976, then as a cardinal when she was a delegate, selected from the St. Ladislaus parish.

"She said that he was very friendly, and that he spoke to all of the delegates in Polish, asking them how they were. I called her the minute I heard that he was selected," Mrs. Osowski said.

Joan Kozerski of the Polish-American Congress said that the telephone in their office "never stopped ringing" after the announcement on Monday.

"A lot of people wanted to help us celebrate the news," she said. "So many of the television and radio stations were calling us to get the correct pronunciation of his name for their programs."

Helmi Golota of Skye Drive in Farmington Hills, said she always felt that "sooner or later" a Polish pope would be named.

"It's been a long time coming, but in a way, we didn't expect it to be this soon," she said.

Father Jim Wright of St. Alexander parish in Farmington said that the new pope would be free of all the "Italian tradition, which could make his job a little easier."

The Communist background of Pope John Paul II will make his papacy even more interesting to watch, since it could well be an age of trying to work together for world leadership, Father Wright said.

"I think it is all terribly exciting," he added.

Father Dennis Ortman, of Our Lady of Sorrows church, agreed, saying the Communist background of the new pope could have a variety of effects on the relationship of the religious and political world.

"Put simply, it could either open doors or it could close doors," he said. "Either way, it will be very interesting to watch the developments in the coming years. We'll just have to watch and see."

Politics aside, Father Robert Kilcoyne, of St. Coleman parish, said he thought the cardinals just "picked the man they thought could best handle the job."

Polish people have always been very strongly bonded to the church, he added, in a faith that has survived many forms of oppression.

"The man seems to be strong, vigorous and talented; and a teacher as well as a listener," Father Kilcoyne said. "It is a very difficult position to step into, naturally, especially so soon after the unexpected death of Pope John Paul I."

School board takes stand against 3 ballot questions

By PATRICIA LACROIX

With visions of leaner days ahead in mind, the Farmington Board of Education passed a three-part resolution at its Tuesday night meeting opposing the three tax proposals on the November ballot.

While all of the board members agreed on opposition to the Tisch and voucher plans, there was some discussion before a vote was taken on the Headline measure. Trustee Richard Wallace, board treasurer, cast the only dissenting vote on a resolution to oppose the Headline plan.

"While I am against the Tisch and voucher plans, I guess I'm just not convinced that Headline would have all that much of a devastating effect," Wallace said. "But I think we should oppose the Tisch and Voucher—they are so damning that we would probably kick ourselves for many years if it passed and we didn't take a stand."

Board member Michael Spilee, speaking for the Board's Policy Committee, outlined the need for quick action by the board.

"As representatives of the Farmington Public School District, members of the board of education are bound to act on behalf of the education of the children in this school district," the resolution states.

"While the board does not generally take public positions on ballot proposals, nevertheless, the November election has a number of issues that are so critical that the board feels incumbent to depart from its traditional non-partisan position and to speak out on these issues which have such a direct bearing on the education of our children."

Wallace also said he did not like the specificity the resolution. Under each of the brief descriptions of the three ballot proposals, the policy committee has outlined four or five reasons why it is opposed to the plan.

"I think it is far too detailed in getting across the impact to the people that we are aware of even care," he said. "We are taking the risk that such specificity invites disagreement, which may negate the impact of the resolution."

But most board members agreed that the people in the district should know exactly why the board was opposing all three plans.

"We have a responsibility to inform the district," Spilee said. "There will be more impact on the voters if they realize the full effect (if any of the plans are approved by the voters)."

Specifically, the resolution states that the proposal for tax limitation (Proposal E) would:

- Decrease state aid to public schools.
- Cut programs such as special education, vocational education and the intellectually gifted programs, as well as reduce the overall district budget.
- Prohibit even modest attempts at increased property tax relief for senior citizens, veterans and middle income homeowners in Farmington.
- The voucher plan, the resolution states, would:
 - Overtake the ban on parochial schools previously enacted by the voters.
 - Probably result in severe cuts in many district programs.
 - Probably mean an increase in other Farmington taxes, even for senior citizens, since it eliminates school property tax as a source of support to the district.
 - Diminish the ability of local boards of education to control and establish their schools.
- The Tisch proposal, the resolution states, would:
 - Eliminate the basic source of funding for public education.
 - Probably result in decreased state aid to Farmington, and, at the same time, increase the Single Business Tax and Personal Income Tax.
 - Possibly result in the establishment of a local income tax.
 - Result in a substantial cut in local education program cuts.
- Several area boards of education have passed similar resolutions, including Southfield, Royal Oak, Berkley and Lamphere.

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