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Millage cut will offset value jump

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Although expenditures in Farmington Hills' 1982-83 proposed budget are up 5.75 percent over the current fiscal year, taxpayers will be unaffected — in keeping with the recently enacted Truth in Taxation law.

The legislation prevents local governments from automatically receiving higher property tax revenue due to assessment increase by mandating an offsetting millage reduction.

The city's revenue for 1982-83 totals \$14,475,998 — up from \$13,217,335 this year. The increase reflects \$532,342 in fund balance and reserve funds; \$417,000 in block grant funds; \$201,000 in additional property tax revenue; and \$100,000 in increased state shared revenues.

Interest income is expected to decrease during the coming fiscal year by \$350,000 due to smaller yields and reduced investments.

"The budget was prepared on the premises of rolling back the millage from 8.5 mills levied in 1981 to 8.16 mills (\$8.16 per \$1,000 of equalized valuation)," said City Manager Lawrence Savage.

"That offsets the increase of residential values of approximately 5 percent over those of 1981."

Farmington Hills' current 8.5 millage compares to 11.25 for Farmington; 25.46 for Pontiac; 25.2 for Hazel Park; 18.67 for Berkeley; 17.48 for Southfield; 15.43 for Northville; 15.25 for Birmingham; 13.47 for Lathrup Village; 11.5 for Orchard Lake Village; 10.85 for Troy; and 10.42 for Bloomfield Hills. Only West Bloomfield Township at 6.27 millage rates lower than Farmington Hills in Oakland County.

The city's staff was trimmed by eight positions during the 1981-82 fiscal year due to layoffs in the building department and several vacated positions left unfilled.

Four positions will be added including two Fire Department lieutenants, an additional police officer and a recording secretary in the City Clerk's office.

Police Department expenditures will be the biggest drain on city revenues. They comprise 29.5 percent, or \$4,264,022, of the budget. The figure represents \$12,675 less than requested by the police department and \$317,101 more than budgeted for the current year.

Patrol costs will total \$985,105, and administrative and clerical expenses \$492,171. Police Chief John Nichols will draw a salary of \$59,168.

The city's boards and commissions will operate on a 1982-83 budget of \$1,337,493 — an increase of \$120,930 over the current year.

The Fire Department accounts for the third greatest expenditure in the 1982-83 budget with an appropriation of \$1,165,211. The sum represents \$107,050 less than the amount requested by Fire Chief Larry Karon, whose salary is budgeted at \$55,000.

Other budgeted salaries for 1982-83 are as follows:

- city manager, \$49,595;
- assistant city manager, \$40,778;
- city clerk, \$34,503;
- finance director/treasurer, \$36,000;
- director public services, \$36,939;
- D.P.W. superintendent, \$31,730;
- director parks and recreation, \$32,598;
- library system, which requested \$921,421, will receive \$840,866.

Allotted to the 47th District Court is \$365,892 — \$39,558 less than its request.

Incorporated into the budget are funds to operate and maintain 126 municipal vehicles. The breakdown of vehicles per department is as follows: police department, 34; D.P.W., 30; fire department, 16; engineering, 12; parks and recreation, 10; building, seven; zoning, six; assessing, four; administration, three; and general government, two.

Although the proposed budget allows for the maintaining of city services at present levels, Assistant City Manager Bill Costick notes that the city's capital improvement program will suffer under the proposed budget.

"We've really tried to hold the line to the bare minimum by deferring capital expenditures, and by delaying new programs and the purchase of new equipment until unfilled."

"We don't have much allotted for capital improvements such as storm drainage, roads and sidewalks — and that's very much a concern."

The 1982-83 proposed budget appropriations only 4 percent of the amount allocated last year for capital projects. City officials hope to institute some type of capital improvement program next year.

The City Council has until its first June meeting to hold a public hearing and approve the budget.



M.B. DILLON WARD/staff photographer

Northville's Hal Rudnickin, a student at Madonna College, feels the tension dripping from his fingertips when Tokyo Oriental Health Spa owner Hiroko Tamura gives him a pressure percussion massage. His spine feels like "it's transcending into a string of pearls."

Bit of Oriental spice added to Hills living

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

"We open, parking rear too," beckons the sign grading the door of the brand new Tokyo Oriental Health Spa, 28841 Orchard Lake Road.

An Oriental mobile jingles as you enter, while your eyes are drawn to three polished plants on the floor of the lobby. An opened box of salt, in keeping with Japanese custom, welcomes good luck.

"Pressure percussion massage," reads another sign. "One-half hour, \$25; 45 minutes, \$30; one hour, \$40. Expert Oriental staff."

Japan's Hiroko Tamura, who opened an Oriental health spa in Waterford four years ago, and a second in Plymouth a month ago, chose Farmington Hills as a third location because of its many businesses.

"I think they need our help. I think they need our spa here because there are a lot of businesses," said Tamura, a U.S. citizen who came to this country from Tokyo eight years ago.

"We specialize in the art of muscle pressure massage, which helps your tired muscles, particularly when you have a back ache or tired muscles from long drives, boring work or any kind of sports."

Muscle massage utilizes the principle of acupuncture, substituting the thumbs for needles, she added.

Tamura's spa is lined along one side with massage booths. Exercise bikes, a sauna, a 200-gallon whirlpool, sunbath, showers, a locker room and a lounge area also are at the disposal of aching customers. More exercise equipment is on order.

Tamura encourages potential customers to call 555-2898 to make an appointment. Ladies wishing to walk in for a massage are encouraged to do so between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., and men from 5 p.m. and 1 a.m.

Persons under 21 may visit the spa if accompanied by a parent.

City officials were slightly apprehensive when they saw the Tokyo Oriental Health Spa sign spring up on Orchard Lake Road between 12 and 13 Mile roads recently.

"I've never seen a legitimate massage parlor, and I've been to them in Tokyo," said Farmington Hills Police Sgt. Albert Hayner.

"We've received some inquiries, so we'll go over there. Not necessarily to play Mr. Snooty, but just to see what they've got. Maybe what they've got is just what we need."

It was the city's job to determine whether the use proposed by Tamura was appropriate for property zoned for general business.

"Our zoning ordinance doesn't cover this kind of thing in any way shape or form," said city planner Richard Lampl. "So we checked with the building inspectors in Waterford and Plymouth. We got a clean bill of health."

"It all depends on how a place like that is run," he added. "And she has always run a legitimate operation."

The planning commission gave Tamura approval after deliberating for two days.

Both of Tamura's employees, also Japanese, received their massage training at an Oriental massage school, said the owner, who said she hopes to expand her business to the size of Vic Tammy.

"I've learned the business very good and have had no trouble getting building permits," Tamura said. "It's not what people think. If we ran a banky-panky business, how could we run a business for four or five years?"

Health service restored

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Dr. Edwin Blumberg, owner of the Oak Hill Nursing Home in Farmington, has lost his latest battle with Geriatric Screening and Outpatient Services, a nonprofit mental health services agency.

The conflict began last summer when representatives from Geriatric Screening were denied access to Oak Hill. According to Blumberg, the agency "did not meet the requirements of the law."

The agency had begun providing free ongoing mental health therapy to nursing home residents in the tri-county area in March 1980 following its accreditation by the Michigan Department of Public Health.

Both Blumberg and Geriatric Screening later filed complaints with the Health Department. Nearly 200 letters were sent to nursing homes in metro-Detroit as a result of a subsequent hearing before the Health Department. The letter stated that Geriatric Screening had been accredited in error and was unqualified to treat patients since it was not incorporated.

Donald Roberts, executive director of the Neighborhood Services Organization, sought to appeal the matter, maintaining that Geriatric Screening was qualified because it is a unit of the Neighborhood Services Organization, which is incorporated.

Task Force Four, the appellate body of the Health Department, heard the Geriatric Screening case Thursday.

It concluded that Geriatric Screening's access to nursing homes should be restored and that a letter to that effect should be sent to all area nursing homes stating that the agency's access was denied in error by the Health Department.

Because Blumberg dropped all complaints early last week, the case was greatly simplified for the members of the task force.

"Blumberg withdrew his grievances, so he was unable to take part in the deliberations before Task Force Four," Roberts said.

Blumberg failed to return several phone calls placed to his office Friday by the Observer. But Roberts, who spoke with Blumberg during a break in the task force hearing, said the nursing home owner most likely dropped his complaints because he believed the Health Department's original position — that Geriatric Screening was ineligible to enter nursing homes because of its non-incorporated status — would be supported by the task force.

"During the break, Blumberg told our attorney Ken Cockrell that if we came to his homes again he was going to sue."

With the exception of a two-week period in March when the Health Department held a hearing on the matter, Geriatric Screening has continuously treated all of its patients notwithstanding the slight confusion of some nursing home managers.

"What it will do in the future is uncertain."

"We're not sure right now what we're going to do," Roberts said. "We want to be sure and ascertain what is legally allowed for our organization."

"The next step would be circuit court, but we're not looking forward to a lawsuit, or to taking this any further."

Geriatric Screening is operating under contracts with the Detroit/Wayne

Please turn to Page 4A

Out-of-towner victim of highway robbers

Dale Dougal, 51, of Columbus, Ohio was driving west on Eight Mile Road near Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills when he was run off the road, assaulted and robbed at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday.

A trio of suspects was arrested by Farmington Hills police and Michigan State troopers shortly after the attack.

Dougal told police he was attacked by a male and two females, all aged 20-30. After forcing him into a parking lot off Eight Mile Road, Dougal's attackers got out of a yellow Cadillac and opened his unlocked car doors.

One woman grabbed him around the throat while the second went toward

Dougal's pockets, pulling out his wallet and taking \$25 cash.

The women then removed Dougal's auto ignition key and returned to the Cadillac, which their accomplice had parked directly behind Dougal.

Dougal got out of his car and walked to the rear of his vehicle.

The suspects' car then lurched forward, hitting Dougal in the legs and pinning him between the two cars.

The Cadillac backed up and continued westbound on Eight Mile. Dougal, who had a spare ignition key, drove to a gas station and called police, giving them the Cadillac's plate number.

Michigan State Police stopped a yellow 1977 Cadillac on northbound I-727 near I-696 in Northville.

Officers arrested Daryl Penman, 25, of Inkster, for driving under the influence of liquor, and also arrested the two female companions. The three were unable to post bond and were transported to Oakland County jail. Penman posted \$50 bond and was released. Exact charges against the two women were not available by deadline.

Dougal, who had been staying at the Knights Inn in Canton, suffered leg abrasions but no broken bones. He told police he was leaving town Thursday.

A 'Band-Aid' solution

Brotherton scoffs at temporary tax

Michigan's lowered credit rating indicates that the temporary income tax increase is only a "Band-Aid on a problem that needs major surgery," state Rep. W.V. "Sandy" Brotherton, R-Farmington, said Wednesday.

Brotherton, who voted against legislation increasing the state's income tax from 4.8 to 5.6 percent for six months, said Moody's Investors Service, Inc. downgraded the state's note, bond and building authority bond rating despite a last-ditch, desperate effort by the Legislature to maintain credit worthiness by passing the temporary tax.

"The temporary income tax increase did not address Michigan's long-term revenue problem, according to Wall Street," he said. "It may take care of the immediate cash-flow

crisis, but it only postpones the steps that must be taken to resolve the problem."

"The continuing loss of industrial jobs from a state that was once an industrial giant and the ballooning welfare costs that go along with it have contributed to our present crisis. These and other factors have driven us to the edge of default. We've been steadily creeping towards insolvency for several years."

"Up to this point the state has been reluctant to acknowledge a changing economy by adapting to it and modifying spending policies. So now we find that Michigan, financially troubled but by no means poverty stricken, has a lower credit rating than states that possess far less wealth than we do. Even if we are able to

'The continuing loss of industrial jobs from a state that was once an industrial giant and the ballooning welfare costs that go along with it have contributed to our present crisis.'

borrow money in the future, it will cost us dearly. On top of that, we've just added the people with an income-tax increase that was supposed to prevent all this from happening."

Brotherton said that the lowered credit rating also may affect the cost to schools and local governments of

borrowing money on the national market. "Until the leadership in state government resets its priorities and sets budget levels that are more realistic, crisis management will be a way of life in Michigan, and our crippled economy will never heal," Brotherton concluded.

what's inside

Community Calendar . . . 8B
Obituaries . . . 2A
Shopping Cart . . . Section B
Sports . . . Section C
Suburban Life . . . Section B
NEWLINE . . . 477-5450
CLASSIFIED ADS . . . 581-0900
HOME DELIVERY . . . 581-0500

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