

New police dispatch studied

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SOMETIMES, WHEN residents call one of the three police or fire departments in an emergency, they're so upset they are unaware of which jurisdiction

they live in and the dispatcher must transfer the call to another community's agency, said Patricia LaPorte, Farmington Public Safety records and communications supervisor. That's when a combined dispatch system would come in handy.

"So our main goal is citizen access — so they have easy access to getting help when they need it," she said.

If established, without the aid of E-911 — a computerized emergency response system that automatically provides police with a victim's address and phone number — a combined dispatch service would offer residents in the three communities one emergency phone number, Siefert said. But each community's police and fire departments would maintain their own separate business phone numbers.

The dispatcher would make a determination of which agency the call should go to," Siefert said.

Whether or not the E-911 is implemented, committee members must decide where a central dispatch center could be located, possible costs involved and whether additional equipment, such as satellite receivers, are needed, Siefert said.

"We all share a common frequency now," Siefert said, indicating it would be fairly easy to combine dispatch systems.

BUT SIEFERT indicated that a central dispatch system would provide Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield with more financial benefit because of their larger staffs. Farmington has

only one dispatcher on duty at a time answering phones, Siefert said. So a combined system would have little effect on Farmington's personnel.

The study is incomplete as to what impact consolidation would have on Farmington Hills' police dispatchers. But, Godwin said, "assuming there would be an excess, there's other jobs such as clerical."

While the traditional 911 system still is available, Siefert and LaPorte said it would be pointless to install it with the E-911 system on the horizon because the equipment is not interchangeable.

And while the E-911 system appears to be a pot of gold for police and fire services, particularly in solving the problem of residents not knowing which department to call, "it's pointless for each of the three communities to go out and duplicate the equipment costs," LaPorte said.

"It's very expensive there's no doubt about it," she said, indicating committee members still have yet to receive any indication from the phone company how much the E-911 system would cost.

Although the study doesn't have to be finished by the time the three governmental units adopt their new fiscal year budgets later this year, committee members are aiming for a summer completion date.

Tax increase is expected in Farmington

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on residential by an average of 4-per-cent," Deadman said. "But it's an average. Some homes may, in fact, go up."

While faced with anticipated increased expenditures in 1983-84, the decrease in total SEV gives the city fewer dollars for each mill levied, Deadman said.

"YES WE do have a dilemma to wrestle with," Deadman said. "We do have a problem with the dropping revenue."

Although city officials could avoid increasing local taxes, it would be at the expense of seriously affecting the existing level of public safety (police and fire) and public works services (garbage collection, sidewalks and winter street maintenance, for example) now provided by the city.

The proposed millage increase can be broken down into two components: a .319-mill increase in operating millage and a .56-mill increase in the debt service millage. That translates into an operating millage increase from the existing 10.105 to 10.50 and a debt service millage hike from the current .68-mills to 1.24 mills.

The proposed increase in the debt service millage is due to the city's two

planned drain projects: the Caddell Drain Project and another in a 98-acre parcel southwest of Farmington Road and Grand River. The debt service millage would be used to increase the funding level for bonds that will be issued to pay for the two projects, Deadman said.

But Deadman maintains that a local tax increase alone is insufficient to offset the city's projected financial pinch. So, in addition to the recommended millage increase, Deadman also is suggesting using about \$147,000 in reserve funds to help balance the proposed 1983-84 budget.

Looking at the chance for improvement in the amount of revenue from the state such as sales, income and intangibles tax, Deadman said, the outlook "is at best guarded."

But city officials still are expecting to receive \$475,000 in state shared revenues, which is comparable to 1983-84, Deadman said.

Although a public hearing on the proposed millage increases is still unscheduled, Farmington City Council members have scheduled four budget sessions, all at 7 p.m. on the following dates:

• May 3. • May 5. • May 12.

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