

Waste charges receive a boost

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington city officials will seek a new solid waste contract with cost containment, following a 72 percent increase to the city in disposal fees, according to City Manager Robert Deadman.

The increase, scheduled to occur Aug. 1, places the city \$23,000 over the 1985-87 budget for water and sewer. Deadman advised the city council July 7.

Browning-Ferris Industries Waste Systems, a national waste disposal company, recently purchased the two landfills closest to the city one at Six Mile and Wapler roads and the Lyon Development Landfill in New Hudson.

With a provision in the city's waste contract giving the city only "the lowest amount charged to any customer," according to Deadman, BFI raised the city's rates from \$1.75 per yard to \$3 per yard for general truckloads of waste.

Larger, non-compactable items will cost \$6 per yard. The only possible increase faced by Farmington residents is for the larger items, Deadman said. The city is charged by the truckload, he added.

THERE IS no dollar amount in the city's current 5-year contract with the landfill's previous owner, which runs for another year, Deadman told the council.

The landfills were previously owned by Holloway Sand and Gravel Co. and have been used by the city for about 20 years, according to previous reports. Effective Aug. 15, new owners BFI will charge everyone the same \$3-per-yard rate.

"We will be meeting with representatives of BFI in the near future to determine if a long-term arrangement, which includes cost containment, can be worked out," Deadman said in his report to council.

Based on past experience, the city budgeted an estimated 10 percent increase per year. Not only Farmington, but Farmington Hills and other communities along the southern border of Oakland County use the same landfill and would be affected by the BFI increases.

Because of Holloway's assurances to the cities of a minimal three years of remaining capacity at the landfill, both Farmington and the Hills decided against participating in an Oakland County solid waste disposal plan last December.

During a recent meeting with BFI, Farmington was told "the method of operation for this landfill will be changed and there will be a cost increase on a per yard basis effective August 1, 1986," according to Deadman's report.

"THE BFI representative presented a communication which stated both landfill sites are rapidly running out of space in their current operating cells, that construction permits for additional cells are in hand and construction work has been underway for some time at both sites," he reported further.

State Department of Natural Resources makes running landfills more costly than before, Deadman said BFI officials told him.

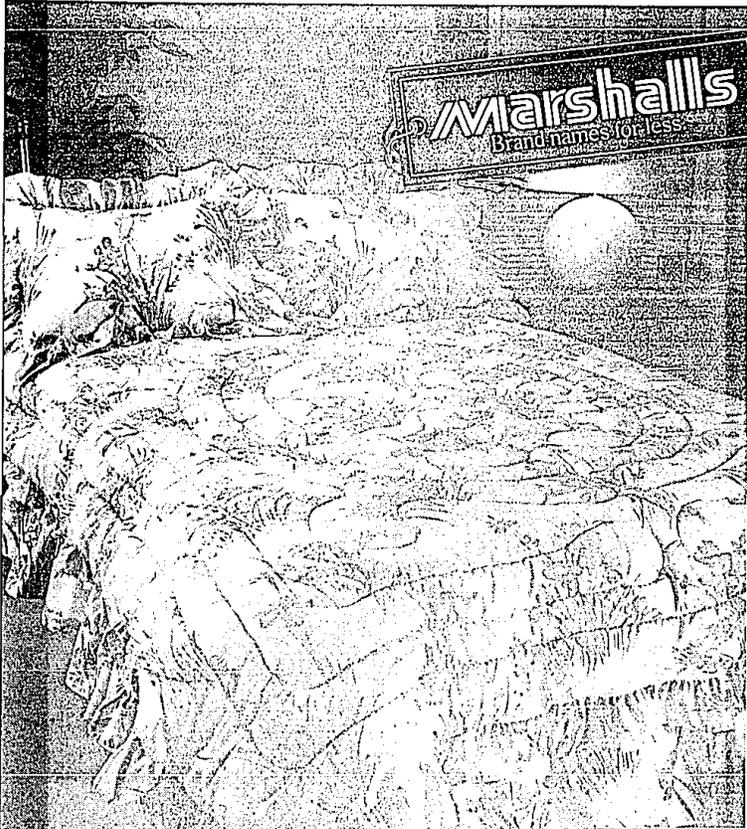
Mayor William Hartscock voiced concern about waste disposal companies as large as BFI. "These are huge operations... that could literally monopolize a large metropolitan area. It looks like a tremendous increase to the total budget."

The Oakland County plan considered and rejected by the cities called for a "modest-sized" solid waste incinerator and a sanitary landfill, reports said, costing some communities an estimated three times their current expense. The incinerator would burn about half the waste collected, generating steam and electricity which would be sold to industrial users, according to information from the county. The balance of the waste would be placed in a landfill.

DEADMAN SAID in December that unless these county costs are substantially reduced, or landfill access changes, the city's decision to stay with the landfill site will be permanent.

The county plan was implemented following a 1978 state mandate, requiring local governments or counties to prepare a solid waste management plan. In 1983, 73 percent of local communities representing 88 percent of the county's population and the DNR approved a revised county solid waste plan.

Deadman said July 7 that all options will be reconsidered but noted that "all the options are expensive."

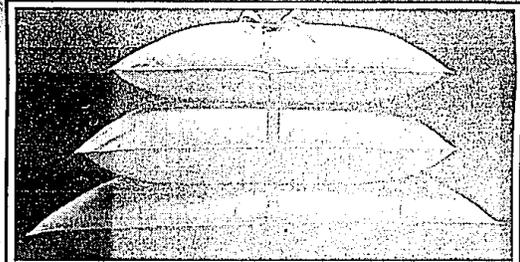


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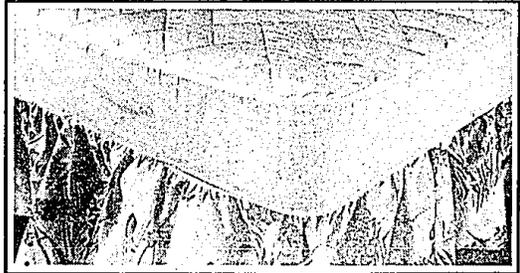
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