

School election seeks 4-mill renewal

By Casey Hane
staff writer

A special school election has been scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 10, to ask voters of the Farmington Public Schools to renew 4 mills for 10 years.

The renewal gives the district authority to continue to operate with

32.5 mills approved in the 1986-87 budget; a millage renewal election does not ask for new millage or raise property taxes. Farmington school board members set the special election date during a Nov. 11 meeting.

"It's legitimate; it's a renewal," Deputy Superintendent Michael Flanagan said. "We've virtually always had special elections for mil-

lage renewals."

The election is being held this winter so district budget preparations can begin March 1 and so that the school election doesn't conflict with elections scheduled by other governmental units. The schools also cannot use election equipment in the fall, and since most other elections are held in the spring or summer, the

winter date seemed appropriate.

"WE DIDN'T want it competing with city millages," Flanagan added. "It was a deliberate move on our part not to take away from their elections." During a dispute with the city of Farmington Hills over a tax increment financing proposal last February, the school district made a commitment to support the city's road millage efforts, and the district didn't want to conflict with city plans, Flanagan said.

In the Farmington school district, 1 mill equals about \$1.4 million. Countywide each district automatically receives 9.54 mills. The balance of district millage — in Farmington's case 27.75 — is voted by the public, Flanagan said.

With the 32.5 operating mills plus an additional 1.3 mills the district levies for debt, the total millage levied is 33.8. The debt levy has been reduced since 1977 when it was 3.8 mills.

FARMINGTON'S MILLAGE is broken down into small increments, which the public votes on regularly, unlike some districts that vote millage renewals in larger increments. Officials are asking for renewal of only four of the 27.75 mills this year.

Next year, voters will be asked to renew 5.7 mills, he added.

"The bottom line is if they vote yes, the millage rate will stay the same," Flanagan said. "If we don't renew it, we can't levy it."

Emergency details to be aired

A local cable television emergency system was approved Nov. 3 by the Farmington City Council.

It is designed to alert local communities of life-threatening disasters over the cable network serving the cities of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi.

It was developed through the local cable company, Metrovision of Oakland County.

The system became operational last September and tests on the line

complete, according to City Manager Robert Deadman. It is voice-activated and broadcasts emergency messages live over all cable channels, overriding all programming in the case of an emergency.

Authorized personnel in Farmington, as dictated by the city council, would include Deadman and supervisory members of the Public Safety Department.

"We believe this emergency override capability provides local gov-

ernment with an additional tool to alert our citizens of emergency situations," Deadman said in his report.

Although the system will use only audio initially, a plan is being devised to alert watchers visually as well, Director of Public Safety Frank Lauffert added.

Farmington would use the system for emergencies, including chemical spills and some weather emergencies, officials said.

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