

# 5.75-mill tax renewal goes to voters Feb. 9

Continued from Page 1

dous loss in our ability to provide instructional personnel."

Employee wages and benefits make up 75-80 percent of the budget, said Michael Flanagan, deputy superintendent.

Despite an ambitious facility improvement plan adopted last year, only emergency repairs would be done in the face of an \$8 million budget reduction, Flanagan added.

The ballot proposal has a clause asking that the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment not be applied to the 5.75 mills for the first year only. It would apply to the remainder of the district's operational tax rate of 37.29 mills and to the remaining nine years of the 5.75 mills, Flanagan said.

The clause is a "necessary legal statement," Flanagan said, because of the February election date. Had the election been held after May 31, the clause would not have been necessary because Headlee would not have applied to the renewal for the 1988-89 school year.

BECAUSE OF its timing, the tax renewal election has brought subtle threats of defeat from some parents angry with recent proposals to change school attendance boundaries.

Other parents have incorrectly tied the tax renewal request to building a new school, one of the proposals to alleviate overcrowding at the elementary level. A new school would require a bond issue.

The renewed millage would be used only to run day-to-day district operations.

It was necessary to hold the election in February, Flanagan said, to assure timely budget planning in anticipation of the "truth in taxation" hearing held each May. "Truth in taxation" allows voters to ask the district to document why it shouldn't cut the tax rate in proportion to any increase in property values.

"Because we're asking voters specifically for permission to levy 5.75 mills in 1988-89, we feel we're entitled to the full value of the 5.75 mills," Flanagan said.

UNDER HEADLEE, authorized taxes levied by governmental units must be decreased if money generated by increased property tax assessments rises by a greater percentage than the U.S. Consumer Price Index.

The CPI, which reflects the nation's inflation rate based on a broadbasket of goods and services, was computed at 1.9 percent last year, mainly because of a sharp drop in gasoline prices.

That CPI, the lowest in 20 years, cut the Farmington district's levying power by nearly 4 mills. The district currently can levy no more than 33 mills of the 37.29 mills authorized by voters. This school year, the district is levying 31.75 mills.

"We don't know how Headlee will affect us next year, but we're probably only going to be allowed to levy 33 mills," Flanagan added.

The district chose not to levy the full authorized tax rate for the past six years, even after Headlee had been applied, because the district has been a botch for land development and increased property values.

But the likelihood of having to absorb \$1.6 million in Social Security tax payments for its 1,900 employees and \$506,000 in start-up costs, exclusive of classroom teachers, to open a new school may require the full authorized levy in 1988-89 if current programming is to be maintained, Flanagan said.

NO LONGER eligible for operational state school aid, Farmington Public Schools relies on local property taxes to generate 84 percent of its revenue. State or county reimbursements for special education, vocational education and transportation programs produce the rest, according to a 1987 report by Superintendent Lewis.

Employee benefit costs in Farmington rose 19 percent this year, while energy increased 16 percent and supplies 5 percent. The Farmington Education Association, which represents 750 teachers and is the district's largest employee group, received a 7 percent pay increase.

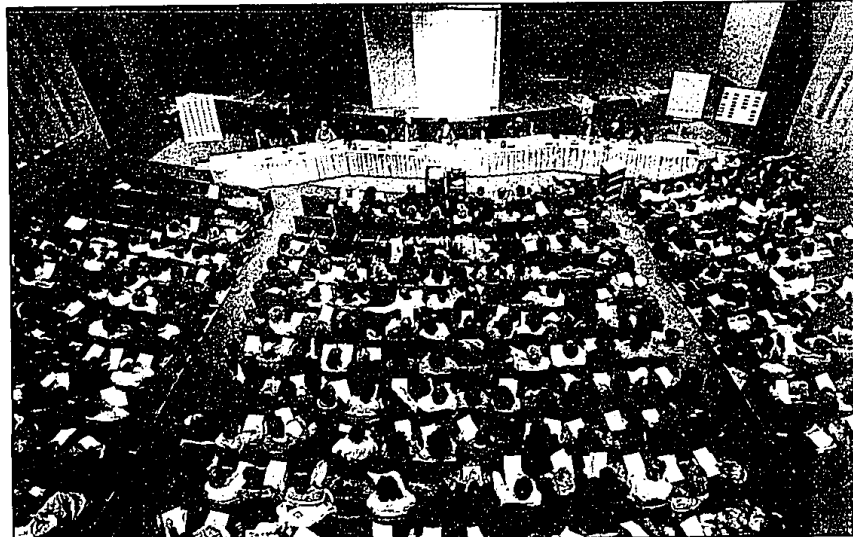
Gasoline and computer costs were down, but they represent less than one half percent of the budget. "Over 99 percent of our budget components increase every year," Flanagan added. "We even expect gas to go up next year."

VOTERS REGISTERED as of Jan. 11 can vote Feb. 9.

Absentee voter ballots are available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the school board office, 32500 Shilawasee, Farmington. They are due by 4 p.m. Monday, Feb. 8.

The board office also will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6 to receive absentee voter applications. In emergency cases only, absentee voter ballots may be requested up to 4 p.m. on election day. They are due by 8 p.m.

Polls will be open on election day from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Farmington High's 750-seat auditorium was near-capacity during the Farmington school board study session on attendance boundaries and school facilities Tuesday night.

## Parents say no to boundary plan

Continued from Page 1

mutating a final plan by the end of March.

"Basically, we're reshuffling the deck of 13,000 people here," said Farmington Hills psychotherapist Robert Klotz, referring to the nearly 11,000 students and 2,000 employees in the district.

Several parents had discussed the proposed redistricting with Klotz; several hundred attended Tuesday's board study session. Klotz was one of about 30 citizens to speak.

"THE KIDS will... attempt to adjust," Klotz said. "One of the biggest things we're dealing with is the unknown."

While some parents see the redistricting issue as a problem, "others see it as a crisis," he said. Reactions of children who are moved can range from stress, acute anxiety to some explosive behavior, he added. "The ones least able to handle the stress will be the most affected."

Most of the parents appeared calm and organized as they spoke at a school board study session. Some suggested the district get professional planning advice and consider alternative plans, which would move as few children as possible. Alternatives presented by assistant superintendent Mary Lou Ankele and other parents received applause from those attending the three-hour meeting at Farmington High.

"We've been here before," said parent and Kimberly Association president Larry Meathe, referring to past school controversies involving building closings and centralized kindergarten programs. "Why don't we get a professional, long-term cohesive plan together so it only af-

fects us once?"

Pat Daniels, member of the Concerned Parents Coalition, which was formed around the redistricting issue, called the plans to shift elementary boundaries "damaging to children" and "unnecessary."

"WE DO have a problem," Daniels said, reading from a prepared statement. "Something must be done. But, that something should be a rational, long-term solution and not an ineffective Band-aid non-answer."

Another parent, William Preininger, spoke to the difference in crime statistics in the various elementary areas. He cited Farmington Hills police statistics, which showed more complaints in the William Grace area compared with the Beechview area. "This is the environment in which our children are educated," he added.

Tuesday night's study session was held in a "town meeting" format, encouraging discussion and ideas for the future of the district, which serves the growing population of the Farmington area.

Many of the parents had organized during the past two weeks after receiving copies of the proposals for the elementary level. They presented petitions containing more than 2,000 signatures gathered during the past week, as opposition to the plan began to grow.

Development of the plans involved 37 parents, either at the sub-committee level, or on the board-appointed, seven-member planning panel, which coordinated the information from the three levels. Although there was opposition to the plan, many parents thanked those who had devoted many hours to compiling the information.



AT LEFT: Brookhill Estates residents Keith Battle (left) and Robert McCubrey favor their children staying in the Wood Creek attendance boundary district.

Staff photos by Randy Borst

## Boundary options wide-ranging

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

School trustees were left Tuesday with a grab bag of ideas to help them plan where Farmington students will attend school.

Building a new elementary, alternative "magnet" schools, year-round schools, building additions and boundary changes were discussed during a study session.

A written plan of boundary and facility changes was also submitted by a board-appointed citizens panel and its sub-committees.

Tuesday, parents spoke against part of the plan which suggests boundary shifts at east side elementarys. The board must make a decision on any boundary or facility changes by late March, when they are contractually obligated to let district employees know of job changes. Officials have said changes need to be made as early as this fall to alleviate overcrowding, especially at the elementary level.

Assistant superintendent Mary Lou Ankele presented several options, suggesting the district survey the community to determine what alternatives would be preferred.

Her alternative of building a new school, but keeping the students who will eventually go to the new school together in another facility "instead of displacing... students" through temporary boundary changes, drew applause from the audience and several supportive comments.

The main thrust of the evening was to hear findings of the 2½-month citizen study.

### ● ELEMENTARY LEVEL

The citizens' plan proposes boundary shifts which would affect 595 elementary students this fall at: Beechview in Section 24, Flanders in sections 27 and 33, Gill in Section 31, William Grace in Section 35, Kenbrook in Section 15, Larkshire in Section 27, Longacre in

Section 27 and Wood Creek in sections 13 and 14.

An additional 314 students from Beechview, Forest, Longacre in sections 7, 18, 17, 19, 20 and the western portions of sections 15 and 21 would attend a new school proposed to be built by the fall of 1990. Also in 1990, small portions of sections 5 and 32 would be redistricted.

### ● MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Although no change is proposed for middle schools this fall, it was recommended the sub-committee remain together to discuss future boundary and facility concerns.

Schools can handle current populations, but Power Middle School is at capacity, which may require future boundary changes, the report said.

### ● HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

The Farmington district is not large enough to support a magnet-type school, which would attract students with similar interests to one building. But it should be a strong future consideration, the committee report said.

After reviewing enrollment numbers and projections from feeder middle schools, "the existing... boundaries appear to be reasonable" for Farmington, Harrison and North Farmington, the report said, "provided students attend the school in their designated area."

Because of special exceptions to the boundaries, there is a discrepancy of 404 students between Harrison, which has the fewest number with 915, and North, which has the highest number with 1,319.

The citizens panel is recommending that beginning this fall all ninth graders — including siblings — attend the school within their boundary; current students be allowed to remain at their respective schools, the board rescind special exceptions allowed last year, and that students in Sections 15, 16, 17, and 18 north of 11 Mile and south of the I-696 freeway currently in the North Farmington area be transferred to Harrison.

THROUGHOUT OUR STORE  
FURTHER REDUCTIONS  
**clearance**

- DESIGNER SPORTSWEAR AND DRESSES
- WOMEN'S DRESSES • SPORTSWEAR • SUITS
- MATERNITY • HANDBAGS • SHOES • ACCESSORIES
- MENSWEAR • CHILDRENS • MISS J • MR. J
- HOME FURNISHINGS • ACCESSORIES FOR THE HOME

WHILE QUANTITIES LAST

**Jacobson's**

We welcome Jacobson's Charge Card or The American Express® Card.

Shop until 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday  
Until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday