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# Farmington Observer

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## farmington FOCUS

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**M**AYOR Jody Soronen took a moment to review Farmington Hills' itinerary as hosts to St. Clair Shores Mayor Ted Wahby and other city officials during Mayor's Exchange Day May 25. Recapping the visit she and Farmington Hills city manager William Costick paid to St. Clair Shores the week before, she noted St. Clair Shores' seven-mile-long Lake St. Clair shoreline.

"We don't have a lake," Soronen quipped during a luncheon at the Farmington Community Center. "So we showed them our retention ponds."

**MORE** detail sought. Two Farmington Public Schools residents asked for more detailed budgets during this year's public hearing May 17.

Although the proper information is available at the Farmington Community Library branches, it just isn't enough, they said.

Trustee Jack Inch asked administrators to consider publishing more detailed information next year. "It might make people feel more comfortable."

## Quote of the week

**6** It certainly takes an artist more than 15 seconds to create a work of art.

— Harvey Goldstein, Farmington Public Schools elementary art consultant, describing art programs that, under a new district, would teach students about world-famous artists and their lives, how to appreciate color and style, and a variety of cultural art experiences (see story Page 8A).

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THOMAS ARNETT/staff photographer

## Parade watch

Even a hot, sticky morning did not keep 6-year-old Maureen Corcoran of Farmington Hills from watching the Memorial Day parade along Grand River in downtown Farmington Monday. But the sun took its toll,

forcing her to sweat it out. Farmington Exchange Club members gave miniature flags to every youngster along the mile-long route. For the parade story, please see Page 1B.

## State fund, not TIFA, eyed for 12 Mile plan

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills officials are looking at state financing rather than considering creation of a Tax Increment Financing Authority for long-planned improvements along the 12 Mile Road office corridor. The decision by city officials to seek financing through the new state Economic Development Fund appears firm, even though a recent Michigan Supreme Court ruling upheld the constitutionality of municipalities' authority to create tax increment financing districts.

"We have moved off relying on TIFA and are looking in another direction now," city manager William Costick said. "Even though the Supreme Court has ruled on the consti-

☐ Development fund may finance 12 Mile boulevard, 8A

tutionality of it, it's an issue that splits the community." The city administration's sentiments would meet with favor by Farmington Public Schools officials, who two years ago filed suit to prevent the city from following through with its plans for a TIFA along 12 Mile. The city withdrew its plans and the school district dropped the suit.

"REGARDLESS OF what the court did, we're relying on the good faith of the city, which withdrew its TIFA," deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan said. "We have good faith that the city will not use school

money to fix the roads. We feel the issue is behind us. We feel we have an understanding with the city."

In a 5-2 opinion, the high court ruled that the capture of revenues by a local development finance authority and the use of that money by a municipality does not violate the 1963 Michigan Constitution.

The high court was requested by the governor and state Senate to rule on a series of issues regarding the 1986 Local Development Financing Act. The issue of greatest interest to school districts was whether the capture of revenues by a local development finance authority and the use of the revenues allowed under the act unconstitutionally diverted tax revenues from other units.

Since Farmington Hills' attempt in early 1986 to create a financing

authority along 12 Mile, the state Legislature changed the TIFA statute. Though the high court ruled on the revised statute, the point of controversy — the creation of a finance authority that captures revenues for a particular project — remained a provision and an issue.

"The TIFA is the common thread. The vehicle of financing is the same," said Birmingham attorney Dennis Pollard, who presented oral arguments before the high court on behalf of school districts opposed to the statute.

Pollard disagrees with the high court's ruling.

"THE DECISION of the Supreme Court is just astounding to me that the (state) Legislature can do with the money what it wants. It seems

the constitution should be given more credence than that. When people vote additional millage, it's for a specific purpose. And by virtue of the constitution, you can't divert it to other purposes," Pollard said.

But under a tax increment financing authority, a portion of tax revenues generated by taxing units in a given area are taken and used by the municipality. "We're really focusing in on diverting taxes for things that weren't voted," Pollard added.

In its ruling, the high court upheld the state Legislature's authority to allocate revenues and to alter the purposes to which they are put. The state Legislature is not violating the constitution by giving municipalities the authority to capture tax reve-

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## Tax hearing to clear way for increase

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Some Farmington Hills taxpayers will be hit twice to support a proposed 1988-89 \$24 million city budget.

In addition to the average 12-15 percent assessment increase on residential property — with some increasing as much as 20 percent — taxpayers are being asked to pay a tax rate increase of less than 0.5 mill.

The proposed tax rate is 9.4 mills, an increase over the current 9.258 mills, which was a reduction from 10.3 mills in 1986-87.

Taxpayers may attend a state-required Truth-in-Taxation public hearing at 7:30 p.m. Monday, June 6, in the city council chambers, 31555 11 Mile. A public hearing on the proposed budget also is scheduled for Monday.

The Truth-in-Taxation hearing is required because a mill simply is worth more in Farmington Hills this year. Increased property tax assessments plus \$117 million in new construction have pushed the city's state equalized value to \$1.7 billion from \$1.5 billion in 1987-88.

UNDER THE state Truth-in-Taxation law, the city is required to roll back its tax rate to 8.6 mills, which would generate the same amount of money the city would have received if property tax assessments had risen at the same percentage as inflation.

By law, the city may increase the tax rate beyond the state-required rollback if the city publicly announces the increase. The proposed 9.4-mill rate is a 9.2 percent increase over the 8.6-mill rollback, said

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## Budget proposes salary increases

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

The proposed 1988-89 \$24 million Farmington Hills budget provides for an average 4-percent salary increase for employees, including department heads.

The following salaries are proposed for the new budget. When available, current salaries are included for comparison:

- City council: \$13,500 (\$1,800 per council member, \$2,700 for mayor). Salaries are set by the 15-year-old charter and did not increase.
- City manager: \$58,000 (\$67,000 in current budget year).
- Assistant city manager: \$56,680 (\$54,500).
- Assistant to the city manager: \$39,624 (\$38,100).
- Personnel director: \$43,472 (\$41,808).

**The proposed 1988-89 \$24 million Farmington Hills budget would increase salaries 4 percent for employees, including department heads.**

- Finance director/treasurer: \$55,769 (\$53,500).
- Controller: \$41,600 (\$40,000).
- Deputy treasurer: \$32,000 (\$31,000).
- Assessor: \$50,440 (\$46,000).
- Deputy assessor: \$37,440 (\$35,000).
- City clerk: \$50,440 (\$46,000).

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## Slain remembered

Heat wulfts, but not destroys, memorial spirit

By Louise Okrutsky  
staff writer

They came to remember those who didn't return from war.

After parading along Grand River in unseasonable 90-degree heat Monday, marchers and spectators gathered at the Veterans Memorial behind the Farmington Masonic Temple. Navy reservist Capt. Glen Boston delivered the principal address to a small audience that joc-

☐ Cemetery service honors slain soldiers, 4A

keyed for whatever shade available.

"On Memorial Day, we remind ourselves of the great price paid by those Americans who have died in battle to preserve for us the heritage of individual freedom and opportunity. Because of their courage, patriotism and personal sacrifice, this heritage remains undiminished today in

an uncertain and often times dangerous world," Boston said.

"The debt we owe to those who have left home and family to serve this cause is beyond measure, but our greatest debt of all is to those who fell in battle. Their ranks are legion, the stories of their heroism countless," he said.

While they came to remember the dead, the living were also honored. Petty Officers Jackie Robinson and

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Charles Larson, post commander of Groves-Walker Post 348 in Farmington, salutes during the National Anthem.

**MEADOWBROOK MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
*Silver Summer*  
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