

Council may put meetings on cable

By **Connie Maliszewski**
Staff Writer

It may not be too long before the Farmington Hills City Council will join you in your living room — on cable television, of course.

After a long wait, efforts are afoot to fabricate the city council's three-to-four meetings each month. Special meetings already are taped and shown on Southwestern Oakland County Cable Commission's public access Channel 12.

So many people have talked about it. There's been a lot of talk and interest expressed in it," City Manager William Costick said.

The city's Committee to Increase Voter Participation also suggested televising the meetings to encourage voting and interest participation in local government, Costick added.

While the seeds of interest are being planted, there's a lot to be

done before the city council debuts in living color. Exactly what must be done will be included in a report expected to be presented to the city council in early August, Costick said.

A preliminary report, completed by Farmington Hills video production supervisor David Tietmeyer, concluded that the city council chamber's microphone system, audiovisual and video camera equipment must be upgraded.

BECAUSE OF the council chamber's configuration, remote control cameras permanently stationed in the walls are the most likely course of action, rather than cluttering the already narrow aisles between seating, Costick said.

The council chamber's microphone system must be improved as well as a means of showing maps and other items used generally on an overhead screen projector during

meetings. The chamber's air circulation system also must be improved.

"We have to buy it all, whatever we need," Costick said.

Many communities included such plans and equipment purchases in franchises with cable television companies. But such items are not included in the 15-year franchise Farmington Hills, Farmington and Novi have with MetroVision of Oakland County cable company, Costick said. Cablecasting of city council meetings was not included in the recently adopted 1989-90 city budget.

"We've also got to develop some rules of procedure," Costick said, referring to the possibility of cablecasting the often-lengthy council meetings.

Though many council members in the past did not seek out televising meetings, some are urging city administrators to hurry up.

"I think this is the way we get the

message across," councilwoman Jenn Fox said, adding that cable television would help city officials show the public that Farmington Hills is an "open government." She urged the city council's television debut by Labor Day.

COUNCILMAN PAUL Sowerby agreed. "I support it wholeheartedly, no matter what it costs."

In gathering information about cablecasting council meetings, Tietmeyer contacted 32 cities in metropolitan Detroit. Of the 32, 13 cablecast council meetings.

"The 13 cities have also reported a larger viewing audience than first expected. Many cities claim it is the most popular program on cable television. It provides instant communication between residents and the operations of city government," Tietmeyer said in a report to the council.

Man pulled from ledge

A "highly intoxicated, very depressed" man dangling by his arms from the Grand River overpass above I-275 in Farmington Hills was pulled to safety by police officers and bystanders Wednesday afternoon.

The 35-year-old East Lansing man was admitted to Westland Medical Center for a 48-hour observation period and a psychiatric evaluation. His only injuries in the apparent suicide try were scrapes, said Michigan State Police Trooper Gene Baughman.

Police believe the man, released from a Westland detoxification center within the past two days, in-

tended to let go of the ledge.

Trooper Judy Anderson, Novi Police Chief Lee BeGole and an unidentified bystander clung to the man for about five minutes before they could pull him beneath the guardrail to the top of the overpass. Other officers and bystanders assisted in the rescue. BeGole received minor injuries.

Traffic on the southbound lanes of I-275 wasn't stopped until the rescue was almost over, about 3:15 p.m.

No one was seriously hurt in a multi-vehicle accident on the overpass at the time of the incident, police said.

Highmeadow undergoing evaluation

By **Cassidy Hans**
Staff Writer

The Highmeadow Common Campus, a two-year educational pilot program begun last fall, is being evaluated this year by a panel comprised of Farmington and county educators and one parent.

Acting superintendent Michael Flanagan has put the evaluation effort near the top on his list of priorities for the coming months, as school officials decide whether to make

similar changes in other elementary schools, or whether to change the Highmeadow program.

Looking at both Highmeadow and the district's new elementary school will raise another issue, Flanagan said. "This relates to another major item — looking at attendance areas. That hasn't been done in many years."

The Highmeadow elementary program, serving nearly 300 students in grades one-five, has alternative curriculum offerings including not only

basic classes, but enrichment and gifted classes in the regular school day.

Students attending the school are from throughout the district and were selected to attend the school through an open lottery system done by the district.

The evaluation is expected to look at the effectiveness of the program and if any revisions are needed in the curriculum program.

HIGHMEADOW was opened in the fall of 1988 after community outcry over proposed boundary changes, which would have shifted several hundred students to different schools because of crowding. The school was proposed as an alternative to the crowding problem, while offering something new for the district.

In recent months, parents have fought over giving their children a chance to attend the school, which

has turned out to be popular with those already attending. The discussion even prompted one parent, Robert Hazzey, to run for a seat on the school board in June.

In May, the nine-person team selected questions to use in the evaluation, which is being conducted by Ernest Bauer, a consultant in the research, evaluation and testing area for Oakland Schools. It is being coordinated within the Farmington district by assistant superintendent Judith White.

Others on the evaluation committee include: Linson Feun, an Oakland Schools consultant with Bauer; David Harris, a curriculum consultant with Oakland Schools; Jan Colilton, Highmeadow principal; David York, Highmeadow parent; Mary Lou Aakle, assistant superintendent for Farmington; Carolyn Mahalak, testing coordinator for Farmington; and Joette Kunze, a gifted coordinator in the Farmington DELTA program.

police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

- **UNARMED ROBBERY**
A man posing as a patron climbed the counter and took two handfuls of money from the cash drawer at the Union 76, 29510 Orchard Lake, Tuesday.
- According to a Farmington Hills police report:
A man thought to be in his 30s walked into the station at 10 p.m., looked around, then left. Returning a few minutes after other patrons had left, he went took a bottle of pop from the cooler, put it on the counter and handed the clerk \$1. When she opened the cash drawer, he jumped the counter, took the money and left. No car was seen.
- **STATION DAMAGE**
A disgruntled patron ripped the telephone cord from the wall of the Marathon station at 29450 Nine Mile Friday, causing about \$50 in damage.
- According to a Farmington Hills police report:
When told he pulled up on the wrong side of the pumps, a patron turned around sharply — squealing his tires and narrowly missing a

- parked car.
- When told he wouldn't be served because of his reckless driving, the man followed the attendant inside and spoke abusively.
- When the attendant said he was going to call the police, the man ripped the telephone cord from the wall.
- **MARIJUANA FOUND**
A homeowner on Craftbury found a garbage bag, containing a half pound of marijuana, lying in the street in the front of his house at 10:45 a.m. Sunday, according to a Farmington Hills police report.
- **BIN EXPLODES**
Damage was estimated at \$70 when a plastic garbage bin was blown up outside the 7-Eleven convenience store, 28318 Orchard Lake, at 12:35 a.m. Monday, according to a Farmington Hills police report.
- **TICKET ISSUED**
A 20-year-old Walled Lake man was ticketed for possessing narcotics paraphernalia during a traffic stop at 12 Mile and Parkhill early Monday.
- Tweezers, a bong, a roach clip, rolling papers and baggies were found in his possession, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

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