

# Sewer project bond upsets school officials

**By Darrell Clem**  
staff writer

In a sudden move that upset Walled Lake school officials, Commerce Township last week approved a \$4.3 million bond issue for a water and sewer project to be funded mostly by tax revenues that would have gone to schools.

The township board adopted a bond issue resolution during a special session Nov. 21, just hours after the township's Downtown Development Authority met to take similar action.

Both measures are aimed at new water and sewer services to spark additional development in a 1,607-acre Commerce DDA district bounded by 14 Mile to the south, Haggerty Road to the east, Richardson Road

to the north and a jagged boundary to the west.

Many municipalities have established DDA districts and used tax revenues to spur commercial, industrial and residential development.

THE WALLED LAKE Consolidated School District, which serves nine communities including Commerce Township and northwest Farmington Hills, already had projected a loss of \$3.3 million by year's end due to a water system project launched four years ago by the Commerce DDA.

But the school district is expected to lose an additional \$12.6 million in the next decade due to the DDA's efforts — and possibly millions more in subsequent years, said Linda Moskalik, assistant superintendent for finances.

## Walled Lake Schools

Last week's sudden action shocked school officials, who plan to discuss the issue with Commerce officials at a school board meeting tonight. School officials did not expect action on the bond issue until after that meeting.

"The timing wasn't right," Moskalik said of the township's action.

THE HASTILY scheduled proceedings even took some Commerce Township officials by surprise, prompting trustee Richard Higginbotham to vote against the plan. Higginbotham said he did not have enough time to review the bond issue information that trustees received only after they arrived at Tuesday's meeting.

"I wanted to delay any action on the bond issue until I could read all the information," he said. "I don't like to vote so quickly on something that's that important without knowing all the facts."

Moskalik, addressing the township board, voiced concerns about tax revenues that the school district will not receive because of the DDA project.

"When tax dollars, voted to support schools, are diverted to pay for municipal services, the quality of educational programs and the school district's ability to plan for the future are compromised," she said.

Moskalik said it would be "irresponsible" for school officials to "agree to a further diversion of funds without thoroughly examining all options and their possible effects on our ability to serve our students."

IT STILL is too early to determine whether the school district might consider a legal challenge to the Commerce DDA's latest move, Moskalik said, though the schools lost a similar legal battle three years ago.

Moskalik said Nov. 22 that Commerce Township will pay nearly \$7.3 million — not \$4.5 million — to repay the bonds once interest is included.

Yet she said the township expects to collect \$25 million in the next 15 years, alone, from tax revenues generated from the DDA district.

With that much new revenue, Moskalik indicated the township could fund the water and sewer project even without a bond issue. "Why not pay as you go?" she asked.

Meanwhile, Commerce Township Supervisor Robert Long said the bond issue resolution has been sent to the state treasury department for approval. A reply is expected by Dec. 5.

The bond sale is expected to occur Dec. 13, which would mean the township could have funds for the water and sewer project by year's end. Though school officials are hoping for a delay in the developments, Long predicted that there will be "no problems."

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## Forest students gathering coats for kids

A newly formed Student Council at Forest Elementary collected more than 50 coats to donate to the needy as part of its initial project this year.

According to parent advisor Linda Newman, the student group decided to choose the "Coats for Kids" program, co-sponsored by Channel 7 and One Hour Martinizing. The program encourages the community to donate coats for school-age children.

The Forest Student Council was formed in October as a schoolwide project. Representatives from third, fourth and fifth grade classes meet every other week to discuss issues pertinent to the Farmington Hills school. They then report to students in the younger grades.

To promote the coat drive, students made fliers and talked over the school's public address system.

"We thought it would make the kids feel good about themselves," said Newman.

She and parent Lauri Stokand and teachers Julie Castillo and Lydia Ott helped students with the project.

**Nai**

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**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS**  
**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**DECEMBER 4, 1989**

Mayor Sever called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Members Present: Mayor Sever, Mayor Pro-Tem Fox, Bates, Grant, Leticson, Marks and Vapozzo. Others present: City manager Cortick, Assistant City Manager Call, City Clerk Dornan, Finance Director Bosch, and City Attorney Ilacqua.

The following actions were taken by Council:

**MAYOR SEVER:**

- Proclaimed December 4, 1989, as Hawks Day honoring the Harrison High School Hawks for outstanding athletic achievements.
- Proclaimed December 10-16, 1989, as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week.

**APPROVED:**

- Resolution requesting that the FDOC fund and the publication costs for the Year 2000 project booklet.
- The placement of a bike path/pedestrian walkway on the north side of Twelve Mile Road from Farmington Road through the intersection of Drake Road.
- Signal installation at 4 locations and proposed lighting for the Twelve Mile Road Boulevard Project.
- Request for employment under Section 10.014 of the City Charter.
- Award of Bid for purchase of duplicating machine for the Department of Special Services from Stockton Office Systems, Inc. for \$7,350.00.
- Purchase of vehicles for Police and Fire Departments from Mike Saylor Chevrolet for \$194,268.75 and to Art Moran Pontiac/GMC for \$36,688.98.
- City Council Minutes of November 13 and November 20, 1989, as amended.
- Executive Session to discuss property acquisition.
- Resolution petitioning the Oakland County Drain Commissioner to locate, establish, and construct an intra-county drain for the Pebble Creek and Minnow Pond Drainage Districts.

**ENACTED ORDINANCE:**

- #C-21-89, to amend City Code Section 14.960 Ten Mile House Arson connection charge.
- #C-29-89, to adopt re-edified City Code of Ordinances.
- #C-24-89, to authorize the conveyance of property to implement the property exchange for the Nine Mile Road fire station.

**INTRODUCED ORDINANCE:**

- To increase the connection charge for the Farmington Interceptor and 1957 Sewer System.
- To amend Chapter 3, Section 3.002, of the City Code, Historic Districts, to add the Bach House, located at 30115 Ardmore and the Original Model House for the Oakland Subdivision, located at 28615 Green Acres in the City's Historic District.

**COUNCIL:**

- Received audited financial report by Plante and Moran, Inc. for fiscal year ended June 30, 1989.

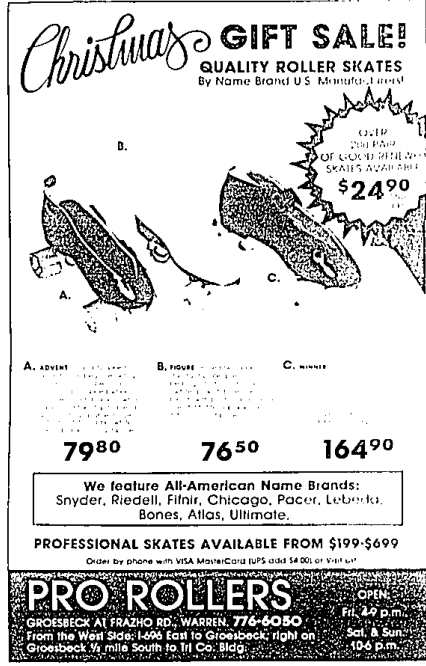
Regular meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

**THURDAY SEVER, MAYOR**  
Kathryn A. Dornan, City Clerk

Published December 7, 1989

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Frederick C. Renick, Jr., Unit #B-61, Household, \$338.85.  
Patrick J. McCrever, Unit #B-84, Household, \$338.95  
Kathy Maria Beard, Unit #B-32, Household, \$423.85.

The contents of these units will be available for inspection the day prior to the sale and will be sold to the highest bidder. Sale will be held at Your Attic of Farmington Hills, Telephone 478-0111.

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English December 7 and 14, 1989 Manager

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