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they're not comparable. Madigan points out there's a 17-percent difference in salary between command officers and public safety officers.

More so, Madigan said Farmington FSOs are well-behind in pay compared to other public safety departments in Oakland County.

In addition to police duties, public safety officers are trained firefighters and respond to medical calls.

Of six Oakland County public safety departments, Madigan said Farmington officers are 10 percent behind in salary in some comparisons. He added there are also disparities in longevity payments and retirement benefits.

"Obviously, we're not trying to get a 10 percent raise," Madigan said. "It would be ludicrous to ask for such a thing. Ideally, we'd like to be comparable to other public safety departments in our county."

Added FPOA vice president

Duano Cowper: "We don't want to be on the top... But we sure don't want to be on the bottom."

Arbitration a first?

The stalemate could mark the first time the city and public safety officers' union have gone to arbitration. State law prohibits public safety officers from striking.

Arbitration, though, is considered time-consuming and costly.

"There's costs to both sides," Lauhoff said. "But the bigger issue is the long-term costs the city could be saddled with that are a part of the officers' demand."

An arbitrator could ask both sides to return to the bargaining table.

Said Madigan, "The door's open. We opened it. They haven't chosen to walk through it yet."

Farmington community officers want to arbitration six years ago. According to Madigan, the city submitted a list of 14 cities in a pre-arbitration hearing to use as a comparison.

Public safety officers are using updated figures from those same 14 cities to make their case. Farmington ranks 13 out of 14 in salary with those departments, according to the list. Many of the cities — Farmington Hills, Plymouth and Northville — also have separate police and fire departments.

Other key issues

Longevity and retirement benefits are key issues, too.

On longevity payments, Farmington public safety officers receive \$60 multiplied by the number of years worked with a cap of \$1,200. Madigan said other departments get anywhere from 2-8 percent of their salary multiplied by the number of years service.

Retirement benefits are also derived by formula. In Farmington, it's the number of years multiplied by 2. For example, a person working 25 years would receive 50 percent of his salary after retiring.

Madigan said other cities have a 2.25 or 2.50 retirement multiplier.

The two sides are also deadlocked on health care.

Lauhoff said health care costs have risen 29 percent in the last year. Madigan said they've been asked for concessions.

"We've made concessions in the last two contracts," Madigan said. "We're currently at the level other cities and companies are asking their employees to switch over to. We're already there."

Union representatives also note Lauhoff recently received a 4 percent raise and other general city employees a 3.5 percent increase in annual salary. That hasn't been offered to the public safety officers, Madigan said.

Madigan said the contract impacts will affect services.

"We live in the community and we have a stake in what goes on here," Madigan said. "Services are still going to be at their highest level."

Hills may tap water-use rule

BY BILL COUTANT STAFF WRITER

By signing on to conserve water in the case of extreme drought, Farmington Hills will get an additional 2,220 additional water taps, which should match demand for the next three years.

The city council voted 5-0, with Mayor Larry Lichtman and councilman Jon Grant absent, to consider the ordinance that would be in effect until a 72-inch transmission main is completed for access to the Detroit water system. That main is scheduled for completion by the fall of 1996.

"This is a worse-case scenario," said Mayor pro tem Joanne Smith. "This is nothing to what they went through in other states," she said, adding that restrictions in California were very strict.

Tom Blaeil, director of public services, said conditions would have to be as bad as in 1988, and even then, thanks to other system improvements, the moratorium on sprinkler use might not be necessary.

The ordinance, which would go into effect at the order of the Michigan Department of Public Health, would limit hours of lawn and landscaping, sprinkling to 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. every other day.

Even-numbered properties could water lawns on even-numbered dates and odd-numbered properties could sprin-

'This is a worse-case scenario. This is nothing to what they went through in other states.'

Joanne Smith mayor pro tem

kle on odd-numbered days. The ordinance would not restrict hand-held hose use.

In other action at the Feb. 14 meeting, council:

- Voted to consider vacation of property between Hancock Avenue and Waldron Avenue in the Richland Gardens subdivision, Section 36.
- Introduced an ordinance providing for cable system customer service standards.
- Approved a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for installation of the Sydney Coordinated Adaptor Traffic System that will include the intersection of Orchard Lake and 11 Mile roads.
- Confirmed meeting dates for March. The council will have a study session on the ice arena proposal at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, and regular meetings March 7, 21 and 28.

Hills assessor open Saturday

Farmington Hills assessor Denis Babb said his office will be open the additional hours of 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 26, for people who want to turn in their homestead exemption form.

"We're slowing down considerably," he said of the number of people coming in to turn in forms.

The city council asked Babb to provide extended hours because of the March 1 filing deadline. Although legislation that would extend that deadline could be signed into law soon, the office will be open for those extra hours.

Officers' pay lags in county, figures say

Farmington public safety officers trail in salary compared to other departments in Oakland County, according to figures provided by the Michigan Municipal League.

Figures provided don't include pension and other benefits.

A Farmington PSO earns between \$25,699 and \$34,261 annually. That falls about 10 percent below Oak Park, which pays its 432 public safety officers between \$29,969 and \$47,099.

It could be argued Oak Park services a larger community. Oak Park has more than 25,000 residents compared to Farmington's 10,000.

However, Farmington PSO sal-

aries don't stack up well with other Oakland County public safety departments serving communities of similar population.

Berkley PSOs are paid between \$21,272 and \$42,787, while Beverly Hills officers earn between \$30,865 and \$41,163. Bloomfield Hills PSOs are paid \$29,037 to \$41,836.

Figures for Beverly Hills and Bloomfield Hills could change, as both are in contract negotiations.

Huntington Woods, which is smaller in population than Farmington, has a top salary of \$29,851 for PSOs. No minimum is listed.

President of the Farmington Police Officers Association James Madigan said they never caught up after agreeing to a wage freeze in 1982.

Public safety officers are trained firefighters and respond to medical calls in addition to doing police work. A Farmington PSO must have a bachelor's degree.

Six public safety departments exist in Oakland County. Auburn Hills has public safety officers, but they only handle police duties.

Farmington Observer
(USPS 167-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48029-0910. Second class postage paid at Farmington, MI. POSTNET 48029-0910. Telephone 480-1100.

Subscription Rates:
One year (12 issues) \$36.40
Six months (6 issues) \$18.20
Three months (3 issues) \$9.10

Advertising Rates:
One week (5 days) \$100.00
One month (4 weeks) \$350.00
Three months (12 weeks) \$1,000.00
Six months (24 weeks) \$1,800.00
One year (52 weeks) \$3,200.00

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