

School issues

Candidates draw battle lines as election draws near

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A chance for candidates to question each other at the Farmington Democratic Club's candidate forum Wednesday gave voters a peek at the battle lines drawn between two incumbents and a challenger running for the Farmington School Board.

While Gary Sharp's question about tuition tax credits and vouchers, was designed to show voters Melody Jaske's support of the financing methods, she zeroed in on his poor voting record in school elections.

And incumbent Linda Enberg, who is running unopposed for a four-year term, took her turn asking Jaske what she would change if elected to the Farmington Board of Education.

Jaske and incumbent Sharp are squaring off for a one-year stint, what's left of a term left open by the resignation of Joe Svoke last year. Sharp was appointed to the post.

Jaske, the only one of the three candidates who supports tuition tax credits and vouchers, was equally hit with questions about her positions. "First and foremost, I'm for parental choice," said Jaske, who also applied for the appointment won by Sharp last year.

While she supports tax credits and vouchers, Jaske defended her position, adding that her choice nonetheless is public education. She was also asked why she opposed vouchers when she applied for the board appointment last year, and now she is in favor.

"It (tax credit) doesn't take as much away from the school district," Jaske responded, adding that last year she couldn't support vouchers because she had not yet seen the legislation.

In her closing remarks, Jaske said she was the only candidate "supporting parental choice."

But Enberg and Sharp defended their positions against tuition tax credits and vouchers. "It's a tout-



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEWELER

Squaring off: Farmington Public Schools candidates (from left) incumbent Linda Enberg, challenger Melody Jaske and incumbent Gary Sharp get a chance to question each other during a candidate forum, the first of the election season.

ed as parental choice. It's not. It's private school choice," Sharp said.

Twice Sharp was questioned about his voting record. "To tell you the truth, I don't know how far back I voted in school elections."

Later he added that as a trial attorney he travels months at a time and is gone during school elections. "I voted in both bond issues."

School board president Cathy

Webb questioned Jaske on her vote on the bond issues. "I did vote in the bond election. I don't believe I need to divulge how I voted."

Prayer in school was another question. "If kids want to meet around the flag pole I don't have a problem with it as long as students initiate it," Jaske said, adding she is opposed to prayer in the classroom.

Sharp and Enberg vehemently opposed prayer in school. "Whose religion are you going to practice?" Enberg asked.

The high school MEAP proficiency test - a subject raised by Jaske - also put Enberg and Sharp on the same side of the battlefield. "I believe it will not be accepted in this community... change the timing and keep it (results) off transcripts," Enberg said.

Sharp also supports the use of the test as an assessment tool. "The MEAP is not successful at the high school level because we can't get kids to take them."

In later questioning, Jaske said she is opposed to the governor's reward of \$2,500 college credit for scoring well on the proficiency test. "It rewards mediocrity."

Sharp supports the effort, particularly since the money will come from a tobacco company settlement, and because it may encourage students to take the test.

"I never paid my kids for grades. In this situation, I think it's worth a try. It didn't work here though," Enberg said, referring to the few students who took the proficiency test.

Jaske also solicited her opponents' thoughts on how the school board handled parents' concern about block scheduling at Harrison High School. "I would have preferred the plan not be as far along when it was presented to parents," Enberg said, adding that involving parents and students start to finish is the best policy.

She added that such a process may not be efficient "but relates to a better buy-in in the end."

Sharp agreed. "Parents should have been involved at an earlier juncture."

Jaske also made it clear she believes parents should have greater access to materials that are used when the board makes decisions. She also wants the cablecast meetings to be moved throughout the district so parents find the meetings easier to attend.

But Sharp responded that only the board meeting room at the Lewis Schulman Administration Center and the Farmington Training Center are equipped for cable television.

To move the meetings and still have them on cable could cost about \$1,000 to move cable television equipment to other locations, Sharp said. "When people want to talk to us they know where we are," he added.



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING WITH THE FARMINGTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (Summary)

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council and the Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, May 17, 1999 in Council Chambers, 23000 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 287-1978.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Bush, Campbell (arrived at 7:09 p.m.), Hartsock, McShane, Mitchell.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Daughy, McLaughlin, Plummer, Sauter, Siquiesdyk and Executive Director Papal.

FARMINGTON CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Clerk/Treasurer Cantrell, City Manager Lauff.

Council met with the Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees and Executive Director Papal to discuss construction and renovation progress at the two branches of the library, to discuss future operations and revenue sources and concluded by discussing Library policy on the use of quiet areas and Board of Trustees attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

MARY L. BUSH, Mayor
PATSY K. CANTRELL, City Clerk/Treasurer

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AGENDA

Farmington Hills City Council
City Hall, 474-0115
7:30 p.m. Monday, May 24

Agenda items include:
■ Proclamation to Jeffrey Medlen for achieving the Eagle Scout Award on May 26
■ Public hearing on cost hear-

ing for Edgehill Drive pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvement

■ Consider amending city code restating provisions of city of Farmington Hills Employees Retirement System to include accumulated changes and remove obsolete material

■ Consider amending zoning chapter to reclassify two lots north side of 12 Mile, east of Greening to OS-2 office district from multiple family and OS-2 from OS-1

■ Consider transfer Class C liquor license in escrow from 30860 Orchard Lake to another

location 29222 Orchard Lake

■ Consider approval of city council summer meeting schedule

■ Consider approval of appointments to boards and commissions

■ Consider approval of entering into a contract with French Associates for the development of a city hall site master plan at an estimated cost of \$7,500

■ Consider award of contract for Edgehill Drive pavement rehabilitation and drainage improvement to Oakland Excavating Company for \$105,560.

Arthritis Today

JOSEPH J. WEISS, M.D., RHEUMATOLOGY
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SPINAL STENOSIS

Spinal stenosis is a condition in which the spinal cord is compressed in the back. This impingement occurs because the spinal canal in which the spinal cord lies is narrowed as an accident of birth or as a result of aging or past injury.

There are characteristics of spinal stenosis that allow your doctor to identify the condition without special imaging such as MRI. These features include a numbness that occurs when you begin walking and which starts in the back and buttocks and goes down the back of both legs. Also you find that leaning forward as you do when using a cart in a grocery store relieves the discomfort and permits you to walk for a long period with no pain. You can go up a hill with no pain, but not walk down the same hill without a return of the numbness.

What you are experiencing is that certain postures place a slight stretch on the spinal cord, and by that action relieve the stenosis.

Knees of the back are not helpful. You need a MRI of the lower vertebrae if your doctor is to gain an estimation of the seriousness of the stenosis. However, he may not always order this examination.

At one time, the medical community thought that if you had spinal stenosis, then you would need a back operation to relieve the condition. Time has proven that assumption wrong. Most spinal stenosis improves with time. Your doctor may be able to make the diagnosis based on what you tell him, and what he finds on examination. Waiting awhile to see if you get better on your own, is responsible medical treatment.

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