

The Farmington Observer

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Hills city council gives blessing to bill as 'long sought compromise'

By RICHARD PEARL
STAFF WRITER
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Farmington Hills City Council members this week were keeping tabs on the progress in Lansing of a modified residency requirement bill they favor.

Council members unanimously passed a resolution Nov. 22 supporting state Senate Bill 198 (H-10), calling it a "long sought compromise."

The modified Senate bill, which the resolution said "preserves the principle of local home rule and collective bargaining," was passed 82-18 by the state House of Representatives.

But the 7-0 council vote was seen as having little impact on the Senate, which was expected to reject the bill, thereby sending it to a joint conference committee with the state House for additional negotiating.

Rep. Andrew Raczowski (R-

Farmington Hills) indicated the compromise bill would face changes. Raczowski, who was present for the city council's vote, said he "probably could not support" the compromise legislation.

He said he has "quite a few constituents" opposing the compromise, which would make residency requirements for union workers a collective bargaining issue rather than a mandate by the city.

The state representative said he sees residency as being "an individual right."

"Where they (city employees) live is a personal issue," he said. "I think they (employees) are worse off now than ever before because of the bargaining issue."

Although Hills Mayor Nancy Bates said she "thought Raczowski really tried to do what he thought we wanted him to do," Councilwoman Vicki Bar-

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nett said she was "surprised" at Raczowski's voting against the compromise in the House. "I think the compromise is very balanced," Barnett said. The bill allows an exemption for families in which spouses have competing residency requirements.

Besides, she said, "Nobody is required to work for a particular

community" and a residency requirement "is not put upon (employees) retroactively."

Fellow council member Jerry Ellis said he was "as comfortable (with the compromise) as I can be with the state intruding in our business."

Raczowski said he doesn't see it as an issue of local control.

The resolution passed by the Hills council said SB 198 (H-10) "maintains the ability of local governments to negotiate residency standards with union workers, which is fundamental to our city's ability to govern in a way that provides residents 'with the best services possible.'"

The compromise bill requires residency for volunteer and paid on-call firefighters, elected officials, city managers and department heads, "which guarantees a reasonable response time to emergency situations."

Former Hills woman sentenced

By RICHARD PEARL
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Paula Kuchciak, the former Farmington Hills woman who tried to hire a hitman in the fall of 1998 to kill the father of their son so she could collect \$5 million in insurance, has been sentenced in Oakland County Circuit Court to 20 to 60 years in

prison.

Kuchciak lived on Albion Street near Nine Mile and Orchard Lake roads. She was arrested following a sting set up by Farmington Hills police and the Oakland County

MURDER FOR HIRE

Sheriff's Department after Hills authorities learned she was seeking to hire the hitman.

An undercover deputy posing as a hitman had met with Kuchciak at a Royal Oak and secretly recorded the conversation.

Kuchciak at the time was involved in a custody battle over the son she had had with Michael D'Annibello, a Commerce Township businessman.

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Albion College's Alana M. Heikkinen is currently spending the fall semester studying in Seville, Spain, as part of Albion College's off-campus programs.

Heikkinen is a junior, majoring in economics and management. She is the daughter of Judith A. Heikkinen and Roger C. Heikkinen, both of Farmington Hills and a graduate of Farmington High School.

Charter from page A1

Hartsok acknowledged there are vacancies. But, he pointed to a flip side: Many people already are serving the city. Lauhoff estimated there are 100 positions on all of the boards and commissions.

"Our community, I think, is very involved," Hartsok said.

"And just like any organization, we're dependent on volunteers. There's always the ongoing need to fill vacancies and replenish the pipeline."

Lauhoff said "The boards and commissions really are what make the city work."

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