

Your millage rate goes for:

The proposed 2000-01 budget for the city of Farmington will be supported by 16.1477 mills. That rate is distributed as follows:

- 8.41 mills for city services
- .89-mill for 47th District Court
- .81-mill for Farmington Community Library
- .55-mill for parks and recreation contribution in 2000
- 1.5877 mills for road repair program
- .10-mill for sidewalk repair program
- 2.80 mills for debt service.

How's your school's team doing? Find out in Sports, Section B

Budget from page A1

than the first Monday meeting in June. Farmington's financial year runs July 1 through June 30.

Cities, particularly older ones like Farmington, are increasingly dependent on local property taxes — generated from the millage rate — to finance services. Because of Proposal A the city receives revenue from the property tax based on the taxable value of property, not the state equalized value as before the adoption of the proposal in 1994.

City officials expect a 3 percent increase in the taxable value of property in Farmington. The difference between taxable value and SEV is expected to grow each year and is now about \$36,000. SEV increases according to market value of property, while the taxable value, under Proposal A, is limited to increases of 6 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less.

That means that state shared revenues — a portion of state sales taxes that are returned to the city — become increasingly important as a means of balancing the budget, covering costs and providing services, Lauhoff said.

The state has a new formula for determining how much cities get in shared revenues. An

■ City officials expect a 3 percent increase in taxable value. The difference between taxable value and SEV is expected to grow each year.

increase of .40 percent or less than half of 1 percent is expected in the new budget year. State shared revenues represent about 20 percent of the city's general fund, which includes most city services and activities. Local property taxes represent about 64 percent of the same fund.

The state now does out state shared revenues based on population, which in Farmington's case isn't too promising as the population has remained fairly static, Lauhoff said.

"Less (in state shared revenues) will come back to us. If we want to maintain services, the state is saying, you'll pay for your own services," Lauhoff said. "That is the single biggest change in city operations. It's good now. It's a good economy. That will change."

City Treasurer Patay Cantrell

is part of the Michigan Municipal Finance Officers Association, which is discussing approaching the state Legislature on changing how the money is doled out and changing the formula, which is expected to hurt older cities as time rolls on.

"We have nothing other than tentative meetings and discussion," Cantrell said. "We want to alert the Legislature the some municipalities are experiencing and will experience problems."

The problem is not only with the current formula, Cantrell said, but also with the fact that the state Legislature no longer sticks to a certain percentage allocation. In other words, the state Legislature is no longer funding state shared revenues according to the amount designated by state law. "So it's hard to build a budget with any degree of confidence," she said.

"Older communities either have a stable population and are having problems with negative growth or are increasing below the rate of inflation. A significant portion of our revenue is

decreasing or not growing at the rate of inflation," Cantrell continued. "It is a hardship on the communities."

In addition, efforts are underfoot to change the amount of property taxes utilities pay the communities, likely resulting in a loss of \$20,000-\$40,000 annually.

The budget's general fund is expected to increase by one-half percent in the new year. The increase also covers replacement of some equipment for several city departments. City officials do not expect to dip into savings to balance the budget. In fact, the difference of \$186,350 — between expenditures and revenues — is recommended to be placed in the capital improvement fund to help finance the city's six-year improvement plan.

"We're getting to the point where we have replaced a lot of the equipment," Lauhoff added.

On the personnel side, wages, other than contractual raises, are proposed at 3 percent. Health care costs for employees also are expected to increase by

Hearing is scheduled

The Farmington City Council will have a public hearing on the proposed 2000-2001 budget at 8 p.m. Monday, June 5 in council chambers, 23600 Liberty.

The public is invited to offer their comments. The council is expected to adopt the budget that night after the hearing.

about 15 percent.

"That's such a large part of the budget," Lauhoff said, adding there are no plans to create new positions in the coming year.

"The city has not increased the size of its staff. Eventually we will have to add a person here or there. There is much more expected of the city than 10 years ago. There is a much higher demand on keeping things nice."

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