

WB man's drag racing case heads to circuit

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER
ppace@ec.hometown.com

The driver of the car police say was drag racing with a 16-year-old Farmington Hills boy who eventually crashed into and

killed a Farmington Hills couple in April - waived his right to a preliminary exam Friday.

Brandon Dolly, 18, of West Bloomfield, whose car did not hit the couple, will face a preliminary exam in Oakland County

Circuit Court on two counts of homicide-manslaughter with a motor vehicle.

His attorney asked that his bond be changed to allow him to drive to a restaurant where he works.

Judge Maria Parker upheld his bond condition that he not be allowed to drive.

The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office has filed a motion with Oakland County Circuit Court to have the 16-year-old boy tried as an adult on two

counts of homicide-manslaughter with a motor vehicle, a 15-year felony; and felonious driving, stemming from the injuries to a passenger in his car.

The process of requesting the adult charge involves having the boy face a preliminary exam and

then a second phase where the boy will be evaluated by a psychologist to determine whether it is in the best interest of the state to be tried as an adult, said Bob Zivian, assistant prosecutor.

The boy's preliminary exam is set for July 9 before Judge Rao Lee Chabot.

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C'ville board passes budget, reassigns community ed

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER
jhubred@ec.hometown.com

With very little fanfare and only a modicum of complaint Thursday evening, Clarenceville School Board members approved the district's 2002-03 budget and millage.

The only concern expressed had to do with the district's beleaguered community education program. There was little to complain about in the balance of the budget, which will add teaching positions and materials for new classes as part of the high school's switch to block scheduling.

According to Business Services Director Dave Bergeron, taxes on a house with a \$160,000 gross value (approximately \$76,000 state equalized value) will increase only slightly - by about \$12. The district will appropriate about \$17.6 million to educate more than 1,900 students in the communities of Farmington Hills, Livonia and Redford.

A per pupil allocation of \$8,070 "reflects a \$200 increase which we're pretty certain we're going to get," Bergeron said Thursday.

Clarenceville is among 36 "hold harmless" districts which had additional millages in place prior to the establishment of Proposal A, which shifted the burden of school funding from property taxes to sales tax. Clarenceville was among those permitted to levy above the 6 mills the state collects for all districts, because it had a levy already in place.

Bergeron said the district's relatively stable financial condition is due to a number of factors.

"We've been very fortunate the last six years since Proposal A. A lot of things have fallen into place for us to have an increase in programs and in fund equity," he said, citing an unexpected drop in the teacher retirement rate and a steady growth in enrollment.

Next year, the district is also expected to show some growth, but that probably won't hold true the following year.

The Oakland Schools vocational and special education millages passed last year also helped Clarenceville's financial position, he said.

In a two-page letter addressed to officials, resident Bud Nusley argued in favor of maintaining the 6 full-time equivalent staff position, rather than eliminating the Community Education/Communications/Auditorium post.

"We believe the board is attempting to use strict-

ly a cost-benefit analysis in its decision to change the...program," Nusley wrote, adding that "hard numbers" exist in favor of the board's position. "Unfortunately, the members of the community who have benefited from the community education classes that have been offered only speak with the dollars that they have spent on those classes. The benefit to them personally cannot be qualified any better than it can be of the child's education."

Nusley also argued the position was only one in the district dedicated to promotions, and a plan to parcel out most of the community ed person's duties to others would result in some things falling through the cracks.

"If you farm it out to other people, it'll become collateral duties," he said.

The list of duties he identified included promotional events like an annual luncheon for Realtors, the cable channel content, the district calendar, Web site and newsletter.

"How many families have decided to locate in the Clarenceville district because of information provided by Realtors who attended the breakfast and lunch programs?" Nusley asked.

While cutting the position would save the district \$20,000, he added, "If you have one family with three school age children that doesn't move into the district, you lost that much in funding."

Board president Matthew Boettcher noted the district has been looking at community education, which is bolstered by contributions from the general fund, for several years. Program participation is considered low.

However, board member Gary Garrison offered a resolution he felt would address everyone's concerns. He suggested all of the duties of the full-time position be reassigned as much as possible, and the remaining duties be assigned to a .4 FTE staff person.

At the May 23 meeting, board member Bryan Bentley had offered a motion to eliminate the position completely, which was defeated pending further discussion. Bentley said after talking with staff members, he could support Garrison's motion, which gave the superintendent responsibility for evaluating the changes on a quarterly basis.

"Where does that leave the PR piece?" board member John Shaw asked.

"Currently, in the lap of the superintendent," Garrison replied.

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