

## HARTSOCK

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The provision is found in the city charters of many Michigan cities, he said.

Section 5.2 Eligibility for Office in City disqualified Hartsock, who resigned from the city council when he moved to Farmington Hills earlier this year and remarried.

"That section reads: 'Except in the case of the appointment of Supervisors, no elective officer may be appointed to any city office or be employed by the city during the term of office for which he was elected or for two years thereafter, except that after the expiration of his term of office he may be appointed as a member of an independent board of commission or to fill a vacancy in the position of Councilman.'"

"The announcement was made public Saturday before the start of the semi-finalist interviews at city hall.

The city charter provision likely stems from the original draft of the Home Rule City Charter or soon thereafter, Gerstenecker said.

"It was probably derived during the time of reforms in municipal government when it was felt customary for politically active persons to move in and out of elective and appointive offices without regard to merit, qualifications or possible self-serving motives," Gerstenecker said. "That, I hasten to add, is not the situation I have found in Farmington."

Gerstenecker added he found Hartsock fully qualified, and that is the point of difficulty.

"Here we have a city charter provision which is intended to

avoid political considerations over and above consideration for candidates based on qualifications and abilities. And yet Mr. Hartsock has, in my findings and opinion, excellent qualifications and ability to serve in the position — if that is the conclusion of the city council," he said.

Gerstenecker said he regretted not bringing up the question sooner.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff will retire Jan. 3, after 10 years of service. Hartsock served on the Farmington City Council for more than 28 years.

Debbie Manns of Southgate was brought in to be interviewed for the 10:30 a.m. spot previously reserved for Hartsock. She followed Darrell A. Fecho of Farmington Hills and preceded David M. Murphy of Caro and Vincent D. Pastue of Clare.

The council will develop additional questions to interview finalist candidates at a closed 4:30 p.m. meeting Friday at city hall. The personal nature of the information expected to be discussed was cited as the reason for closure.

Officials will conduct interviews of the two finalist candidates at 6 p.m. Dec. 18 at city hall.

The city received 57 applications for the post, which will have a salary in the upper \$80,000s. Lauhoff is paid \$91,500.

Gerstenecker also assisted with the hiring process that ended in Brent Morgan's appointment as Farmington Downtown Development executive director.

stuck@oehomecomm.net | (248) 477-5450

## Though disqualified, Hartsock enjoyed process

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Former Farmington Councilman Bill Hartsock stood before the City Council and the public Saturday, accepting the fact that he could not continue as a city manager candidate.

Hartsock spoke at the time originally scheduled for his interview. He was disqualified based on a city charter provision that prohibits elected officials from seeking employment with the city for two years after they leave office.

"If nothing else, it was gratifying to have gone through that process," Hartsock said.

He said he hadn't worked on his resume for many years and talked to old friends and colleagues when he requested letters of reference. Reading from the cover letter of his application, he said, "As you know I have a passion to serve this community."

Hartsock hadn't discussed his application with many people with hopes to keep it confidential for professional reasons. He

was aware his name would be made public as a semi-finalist candidate.

"I was concerned on a professional level that many of my clients who live in Farmington and Farmington Hills would find it unsettling that I was being considered and would switch careers," Hartsock said.

He said he appreciated confidentiality earlier in the process. In fact, Hartsock hadn't mentioned his application to his son or mother until Frank Gerstenecker, a search consultant for the Michigan Municipal League, informed him he was a semi-finalist.

"My son simply said, 'Well, who's going to be my financial advisor?' It was with great trepidation that I even went through the process."

People wished him well when they read about his candidacy in the newspaper, Hartsock said.

Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell said City Council members were disappointed and regard Hartsock highly. The council

met in closed session prior to the semi-finalist interviews Dec. 7 to discuss the situation.

"We determined that it would not be appropriate to go forward with Mr. Hartsock's candidacy vis à vis the charter," Mitchell said.

The community was well-served in terms of the search process, Mitchell added. "There is a provision in the charter albeit overlooked by past city managers, former colleagues, current council; everybody missed the opportunity and the process worked. Mr. Gerstenecker brought it to light. Thank God it was Friday and not Monday."

It's unfortunate that policy is set to catch the worst in people rather than to encourage the best, Hartsock said.

Mitchell asked the local newspapers to treat Hartsock with respect.

"This shouldn't be the headline but the footnote to the whole process," Hartsock said.

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## FUNDS

FROM PAGE A1

The news already isn't good with state shared revenues being cut to communities in the state, including nearly

\$300,000 in Farmington Hills in the middle of its fiscal year.

Dwyer and other city department heads will be closely examining their 2003-04 fiscal year budget after the holidays.

The chief said U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow is inviting him and other local police and public officials to discuss their police funding and homeland security concerns with her at the Oakland County Board of Commissioners office on Dec. 18.

State Rep.-elect Aldo Vaggoni, who represents Farmington and Farmington Hills, said state shared revenues will likely continue to be cut in future years while the

state works to balance a deficit.

Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock told the council this week that all department heads are being cautioned to ask only for purchase requests that are strictly necessary.

The council plans to hold a study session in January to discuss a strategy to deal with the recent cuts in state shared revenues.

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## PEDESTRIAN

FROM PAGE A1

hitting him before he was struck." The man was a resident of the Sunrise Assisted Living facility, located north of 13 Mile, west of Middlebelt, police said. Officers specializing in accident reconstruction have been assigned to the case, Bledsoe said.

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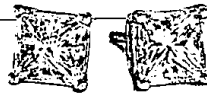
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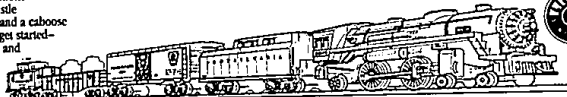
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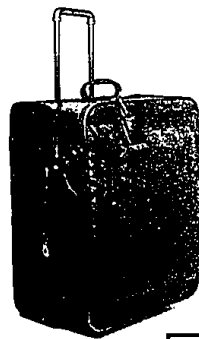


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