

the farmington enterprise & observer

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

15¢ a Copy

Wednesday, December 20, 1972

Volume 84, Number 20 • Four News Sections

Graduated Tax Limit; 7-Man Council Picked For Charter

By DAN MCCOSH

A May 8 election is tentatively set as the date Farmington Twp. residents will vote on whether to incorporate as the City of Farmington Hills.

The charter commission made major decisions on the shape of the new city Tuesday in a wrap-up session that set a graduated tax limitation, set bonding limits, and agreed to go with a seven-man council to be elected at large.

The tax question, which has been a major issue with the commission, was decided in favor of a limitation starting at six mills and increasing one mill every two years, to a maximum of 10 mills in 1980.

COMMISSIONERS VOTED in favor of a gradu-

ated limitation following the presentation of a mathematical model by chairman Robert McConnell which indicated future growth in assessed valuation would not be enough to cover projected expenditures if the millage remained constant.

The projected deficit would demand an increase in township millage within two years even without cityhood, according to McConnell.

Any form of ward system was rejected, as the commission stayed with an earlier resolution favoring the seven-man council elected at large.

William Hatton, a south-end resident, argued unsuccessfully from the audience in favor of a nine-man council elected from wards.

"The usual argument that wards bring evils of

ward politics is not true with a non-partisan government," Hatton said.

"All representation on this commission and the present township board has been from north of 11 Mile Rd."

THE COMMISSION rejected Hatton's argument, several members arguing the ward system would fragment the community.

Bonding limitations were set at five per cent of the assessed valuation, excluding certain types of "revenue loans."

Finance chairman Richard Frankel presented the proposal of the low limit, saying many cities were 10 per cent or higher.

The main argument for the lower limit was it would lower the possible tax obligations the city could incur trying to pay off bond issues.

Projects Moving

A mammoth water line and equally large sewer project got out of the talking stage and onto the drawing boards with resolutions of the Farmington Township Board Monday.

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New Reading

A small vocabulary for small children is incorporated in a series of reading books for Farmington kindergartners. To find out about a new program in your child's school, see:

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Happy Indians

Observerland folks extended their hearts, efforts and pocketbooks to several groups of Michigan Indians in recent weeks, and the local man in charge will get an honorary Indian name as a result.

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Sport Ratings

Cage ratings, swim ratings, it's all in today's sport section along with the top 20 prep scorers in the area with stories and box scores on all the games. For the complete Observerland sport story, flip to today's sport section.

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Gifts Where Needed

There's been a great response to a call for Christmas remembrances for some "forgotten" people of this area. Read about the project in today's Women's Section.

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House Explosion Burns Workman

What started out as a family "Christmas surprise" turned into a near tragedy Monday as an explosion and fire at 24131 Broadview, Farmington seriously burned a man working on a new addition to the house.

Patrick Seabolt, 22211 Ponca, Southfield, told police he was installing a new counter top in the house using a highly flammable contact cement.

Owner Edward W. Davis, who was not home at the time, told police he was expecting to get the addition finished before the holidays.

A new stove had been installed in the room, but Seabolt said he checked once and thought it was turned off.

THE FUMES from the cement ignited, apparently from the stove's pilot light,

and the wall caught on fire. Seabolt grabbed the remaining can of cement to take it outside, but the can exploded, splashing him with the burning glue and blowing out the windows in the house.

A fellow worker, Daniel Chynoweth, Walled Lake, grabbed a sheet and put out the flames enveloping Seabolt, and the two got out of the house.

City firemen were at the scene for nearly two hours fighting the blaze, after Seabolt was taken to Botsford Hospital with burns over 75 per cent of his body.

No estimates of damage were immediately available, but firemen said heat badly damaged the one room and damage throughout the home was "extensive."



AN EXPLOSION resulted in the damage of this kitchen and serious injury to Patrick Seabolt, 22211 Ponca, Southfield. Seabolt was applying

a formica top on the kitchen when the inflammable contact cement with which he was working caught fire and exploded. (Evert photo)

Vacant House Coming Down

A house at 20913 Rennselaer was ordered torn down by the Farmington Township Board Monday.

The house, which has been standing vacant for more than six years, was recently the subject of complaints by neighbors to the Enterprise and Observer.

The owner of the house, who lives in California, was notified in March and December it was in need of repairs, according to the building department.

The board authorized taking three bids on the demolition of the house, to be levied against the tax bill.

Schools Score High On Achievement Tests

By STEVE BARNABY
Larry Freedman, assistant superintendent of elementary education, says he is "satisfied" with Farmington students' high ranking in academic achievement on the Michigan Department of Education Assessment Test.

The tests, which were given state-wide to fourth and seventh graders, shows that

Farmington fourth graders are in the 91.92 percentile range in achievement, while seventh graders are in the 87.89 percentile.

BASIC SKILLS tested were reading, mechanics of written English and mathematics.

Also taken into consideration on the tests are the human resources of the

school, district financial resources and the student background.

Freedman said he was also satisfied with what these results showed in that Farmington had 38.2 teachers per 1,000 pupils. Only 23 per cent of the state's schools have a lower teacher pupil ratio.

The test also showed that 34.3 per cent of Farmington teachers have master's degrees which is more than 83 per cent if the other state districts.

Freedman said he thought there was a correlation between the high scoring by the pupils and the high number of teachers per pupil.

"I feel that the teacher-pupil ratio does affect each level of youngsters. The more individualized attention there is, the better the student achieves," said Freedman.

FREEDMAN ALSO noted that the contracted salaries of teachers averaged out at \$11,222, which is higher than the average salary paid in 86 per cent of the state's school districts.

The assessment report also showed that the operations expense for each child is \$937. This is more than 92 per cent of the districts.

The composite estimate of socio-economic status (SES) is a measurement of the family income, parents' educational level and parents' occupation.

Although scoring at 98 percentile, Freedman warns that the results are unreliable because many children aren't sure of the information.

This year's SES was computed for each district by

averaging the 1970-71 fourth and seventh grade scores. It was these district SES scores which were combined to produce a single "weighted district mean" SES for the 1971-72 program.

The 1970-71 scores had been based upon anonymous responses of fourth and seventh graders to a pupil background questionnaire.

LAST YEAR'S assessment test included a pupil attitude section which was eliminated this year because state school officials thought the test was obscure in determining results.

The purpose of the test was to determine children's attitude toward school and the self-concept.

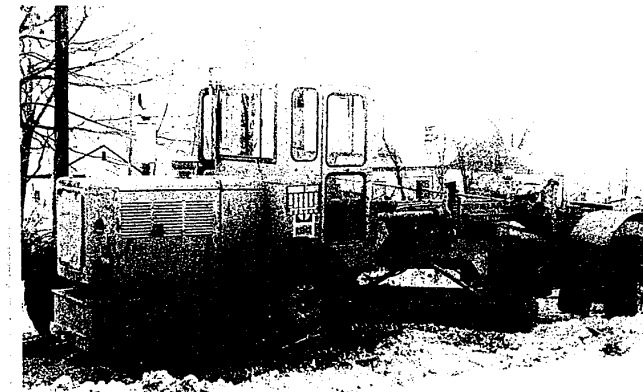
Because officials feel the test wasn't adequate in determining the effect of achievement in correlation with attitude, they instituted an experimental test which was given in three school districts in the state.

If the test proves to be adequate it will be included on a state-wide basis in the entire assessment test.

Freedman said the main advantage to the test is not in the comparison made with other school districts in the state, but in evaluating what areas could be improved within the school district.

"THE VALUE of the test is so the district can look at the individual test scores and see where the weaker areas exist. The results say to us, let's dig in," Freedman said.

Continued on 3A



THINK YOU have it bad? Folks on Springbrook between 10 Mile and Shiawassee have been complaining about the condition of their street, and the Oakland County Road Commission sent a grader out. The result is shown here,

as the Springbrook bog felled another victim. To add insult to injury, residents complain that it has been so long since the ditch along the road has been cleaned out that trees a foot in diameter are growing in the middle. (Evert photo)



'Tis the season to be jolly and Santa suggests that when your Observer Carrier collects this month, you ask for a receipt. Because when you do, it makes your carrier jolly and the receipt he hands you is worth its face value toward a money-earning want ad in your hometown newspaper. What could be jollier than that?

MERRY CHRISTMAS!