



Farmington Observer

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Board beefs over bids

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Farmington's Board of Education has better things to do at board meetings than sit back and listen while long lists of bids on construction work are being read.

That's the sentiment the Farmington Board plans to express to the state legislature, which since last spring has required that bids be opened and read at school board meetings.

Previously, bids had to be opened and read at a public meeting — but not necessarily a school board meeting.

Like most governmental bodies, school boards do business by asking for bids on work to be done. The least-expensive qualified bidder usually gets the job.

At a Farmington Board meeting last Tuesday, Director of Administrative Services Jack Lawing spent about 30 minutes opening and reading 24 bids on nine separate projects officials hope will make Farmington High School and Warner Middle School more energy efficient.

Representatives of most of the bidding firms were in the audience, but bidders couldn't be determined until the offers were sorted out and examined.

"I consider this a waste of 30 minutes and the time of about 30 people," said Richard Wallace, board treasurer, after the often-confusing list of bids was read.

Wallace suggested that the board write state representatives Wilbur Brotherton, R-Farmington, and Jack Faxon, D-Farmington, to complain about the law making bid reading part of the board meeting on projects involving \$10,000 or more.

BOARD PRESIDENT Helen Prutow called the process "a waste of time" and said that the old method of reading the bids at a separate hearing was "very effective."

"It doesn't do us much good to sit here and take down those numbers," she said. "These bids have to be analyzed and studied. I don't see any problem with opening them at a public hearing."

Added Trustee Jim McGlinchey, "We're expressing our concern about this legislation which seems to take away from the time we spend on the education of the children of the district."

Asked why the legislature thought the new law was necessary, Trustee Jack Inch said, "There was some chicanery going on in some small districts — somebody's brother getting a big fat contract on something."

Agreed Trustee Susan Rennels, "I think their feeling was that some bids were being mishandled."

It won't be the first time the Farmington Board has complained to their state representatives about the law. They went on record as opposing it last spring after a reading of bids for fixing roofs of schools took almost an hour.

CONCERNING THE bids received last Tuesday, Lawing said, "We're going to evaluate everything that's been turned into us and also look at the qualifications of the bidders. Hopefully, we can come back with a recommendation by the next board meeting."

Lawing said that a "50-50" energy grant (local funds are matched with state and federal money) provided about \$150,000 for the energy conservation projects.

The projects include new storm windows, insulating glass block, ceiling fans, solar screens to heat water, pool and domestic water heaters, solar pool and domestic water heaters, water saving showers, microprocessor control systems and fluorescent lighting fixtures.

The Farmington Board of Education meets next on Dec. 6, a Tuesday, in the Farmington High School auditorium. A Policy and Board Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m., and the board meeting begins at 9 p.m.



RANDY BOST/Staff photographer

Winning form

That's what Mary Robowski and her teammates from Mercy High School showed recently in their game against North Farmington during the

Michigan High School Athletic Association Girls State Tournament. To read more about the game, turn to the sports section.

Business ties knot with local educators

By Tom Baer
staff writer

"Assembly Skills" and "Operation of Computer-Controlled Equipment" aren't likely to turn up on anyone's best-seller list, and the authors probably won't realize a cent from the movie rights.

But the two tomes are hot items

these days in the training programs of TRW, which calls itself "a worldwide diversified manufacturer of high-technology products," some of which are produced at a plant in Farmington Hills.

And the authors, five people who normally make their livings in public education, are proud of their literary foray into private industry.

ABOUT A year-and-a-half ago, TRW, a Cleveland-based company whose 1982 sales amounted to about \$3.1 billion, turned to the Farmington Public Schools when it needed some technical manuals written and a lesson plan prepared.

Some Farmington instructors gladly obliged — and were paid for their work with federal funds.

Thus began a project which "ties business and industry with education to make our state and local area an attractive place to be," according to Lewis Schulman, Farmington's Superintendent of Schools.

The authors included Richard Burgess, an electronics teacher at Farmington High School, and Greg Pare and Ron Papa, both laid off from similar teaching positions.

Charlene Parrott, the director of career education at Farmington High, and Jeanie Young, an English teacher at Harrison, edited the work.

-elected to the city council this year out of a field of five candidates. Political newcomer Roger Walker also was elected, replacing Councilman William Mitchell who did not seek re-election.

Yoder previously served as mayor from 1973-76. Hartsock, who has served on the council for the last 10 years, was mayor from 1979-80.

Yoder is named as city's mayor

Eighteen-year city council veteran Ralph Yoder is Farmington's new mayor, and William Hartsock, the mayor pro tem.

The Farmington City Council unanimously elected Yoder and Hartsock last week during its reorganizational meeting which historically follows city elections.

Both Yoder and Hartsock were re-

THEY WERE paid by the hour with federal funds administered by the state Department of Vocational Education

Please turn to Page 2

Height fight comes to vote over hospital

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

The fate of a zoning ordinance which would allow Botsford General Hospital to expand could rest in the hands of a Farmington Hills council member who also is a trustee at the hospital.

To amend the ordinance, which will be considered at 7:30 p.m. tonight, a full majority (four votes) is required. Although council members voted 3-2 last week to introduce the amendment, Councilwoman Jan Dolan, a Botsford trustee, abstained from voting on the issue. Mayor Fred Hughes and Councilman Donna Wolf opposed the amendment. Councilman William Lange was absent.

The amended ordinance would enable Botsford to extend its south tower to a maximum 85 feet — 20 feet taller than current zoning allows.

If Hughes and Wolf maintain their opposition to the amendment, Dolan may have to step forward, amid possible charges of conflict of interest, and vote if Botsford is to move ahead with its \$11 million expansion plans. City attorney Paul Bibeau, however, will also have to determine whether Dolan's vote may legally qualify to amend the ordinance.

Dolan was unavailable for comment at press time.

But if she chooses to abstain from voting on the amendment, passage will depend on Lange attending tonight's council session and voting in favor of the measure.

MEANWHILE BOTSFORD has been thrown into the middle of a political battle between those who are adamant about maintaining a "low-profile community" and those who do not want such restrictions, but vote against amendment at least until the zoning restrictions can be changed.

Even if the council provides the full majority needed to amend the ordinance, the new council which will take office in January could later rescind the amendment, plunging Botsford back to square one. Council members-elect John Dudley and Joe Alkateeb last week voiced opposition to the amendment. Councilman Jack Burwell who last week favored the amendment will not be on the council in January.

If council members approve the amendment tonight, Botsford's only defense to the possibility of its rescission next year is to immediately begin construction before another wave of political battling begins.

The council's vote last week to introduce the amendment overturned the city planning commission's earlier recommended denial. But if the council amends the special purpose-2 (SP-2, restricted) for hospitals allowing height up to 60 feet, it will be the third time officials have sidestepped planning recommendations. In the past, council approved zoning changes allowing the Metro/Vision cable firm and the Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co. to extend structures beyond 50 feet.

Agri-business plan is backed

State house and senate Republicans are looking to agriculture and forestry to play a larger role in Michigan's economic recovery, according to state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington.

Called the Republican Action Plan for Agri-business/Forestry, the plan would generate \$22 billion a year for the state's economy, according to Brotherton.

"For several decades Michigan's economy has been dominated by the auto industry. Today we are at a crossroads as we search for ways to stimulate our sagging economy," he said.

Brotherton noted that Michigan is second only to California in the number of commercial crops grown.

AMONG THE proposals offered by the authors are:

- A 10-year phase-out exemption from the Single Business Tax for agriculture or forestry industry processing facilities, whether they be existing, expanding or new.

- Creation of a new agricultural and forestry research and development fund.

- Earmarking a portion of horse racing revenues for the purpose of promoting horse racing, increasing purse levels and improving race track facilities.

- Creation of a legislative policy task force to develop an equitable statewide water-use policy.

"Food processing, export sales of farm products and the commercial expansion of wood and paper products have a job-growth potential that has barely been tapped."

"We must remember that Michigan residents involved in agri-business and forestry experience many of the same economic disincentives which stunt investment and growth in more traditionally defined businesses like General Motors, Clark Equipment and the small retailers and manufacturers," said Brotherton.

what's inside

Community Calendar . . . 4B
Editorials 6A
Inside Angles 3A
Shopping Cart . . . Section B
Sports Section C
Suburban Life . . . 4, 5, 6B
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