



# Farmington Observer

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## Secrecy shrouds audit's findings

By Julie Brown  
staff writer

Farmington's library trustees plan to meet secretly today at 5 p.m. to review the results of an audit of the library system's financial records.

Labeled as a special meeting, it will be in the Farmington Hills branch on 12 Mile Road.

Library board President Ernest Sauter, meanwhile, has refused to comment on the recent audit by Plante and Moran of the financial workings of the

library system.

"I don't wish to be interviewed over the telephone with you," said Sauter, when contacted Tuesday afternoon.

"No more telephone interviews."

"You're well-versed in the Open Meetings Act," he said when asked to explain his decision. "I would also suggest you review the secrecy in communications act."

When asked what statute he was referring to, Sauter declined to elaborate. At today's meeting, library trustees will review the results of the audit with

Library Director Gordon Lewis and his attorney.

Questions have recently arisen concerning the library system's accounting practices. Questions have also been raised concerning the system's personnel policies.

A number of professional employees have resigned from the Farmington library system in recent months. Protests over the February resignation of Librarian Jill Locke, after 13 years with the Farmington Community Li-

brary, helped bring the situation into the public eye.

Locke's resignation followed a decision to move her to a new position, that of Coordinator of Community Services. According to the job description for that position, the Community Services Coordinator "serves in an advisory capacity and is not directly responsible for staff supervision." In her previous position, Locke had supervised library employees.

"It is, that's all," Sauter said Tues-

day when asked if today's meeting was still on. A memo announcing the special meeting was posted Friday.

"I don't know," Sauter said when asked if he thought Lewis should resign. "I think it's a decision for the board to make. I don't think anything until I've reviewed all the information."

Library trustees met in a closed meeting with Lewis on April 10. The trustees refused, however, to reveal what actions, if any, were taken during

the closed session.

Michigan's Open Meetings Act requires that any formal actions taken during such a closed session be made public. The Library Board is subject to the provisions of the Open Meetings Act.

A memo issued to library staffers April 11 referred to Lewis as being on "vacation." Beverly Papal, assistant library director, has supervised the operations of both library branches during Lewis' absence.

## Hills eyes increase in taxes

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills taxpayers will dig a bit deeper into their wallets to pay a less than one mill increase in local taxes to help finance capital improvements if city officials adopt a proposed \$16.6-million 1985-86 budget.

The proposed .8-mill increase would raise the current 8 mill tax rate to 8.8 in 1985-86. The proposed tax rate represents a 10 percent increase in local taxes.

"I don't feel it is a frivolous budget, it is reasonable," said City Manager William Costick on Monday.

The proposed 8.8 mills is comprised of a total 7.7 mills for operations and debt, which is the same as the rate levied this year.

The remaining 1.1 mills of the total proposed 1985-86 tax rate would be used for implementing projects listed in the upcoming fiscal year of the city's six-year capital improvements program.

A public hearing to discuss the proposed 1985-86 budget and tax increases is scheduled for 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 22. The budget must be adopted by Monday, June 10, council's first regular meeting of the month.

The proposed 8.8 mills would mean that a taxpayer with a \$90,000 house assessed at \$45,000 would generally pay \$396 if the increase is approved. This estimated total excludes millage taxpayers would pay for the school district, community college or county.

WHILE OFFICIALS are proposing to increase local taxes, the city's state equalized valuation (SEV) is also expected to increase by approximately \$117.8 million over the 1984 total of \$995.1 million. Consequently city taxes will be applied against property of greater value meaning the city will generate more revenue.

Under the state's Truth-in-Taxation Act, a governmental unit may not generate more revenue at the same tax rate as in the previous year unless a resolution is adopted and the public is notified of the increase.

The proposed tax increase to help pay for capital improvements is the city's second attempt to raise money to finance a full year's worth of projects listed in the six-year improvement program.

The first attempt came last November when voters defeated a request to give the city authority to levy up to an additional 1.5 mills for 20 years for capital improvements. The request asked voters to increase the city's total taxing authority from the current 10-mill charter limit to 11.5.

After voters defeated that request, council members in January launched a trial balloon to test public opinion on raising local taxes for capital improvements.

The resolution adopted in January called for allowing council to levy an additional two mills to finance capital projects. If council had pursued this avenue, the local tax rate would have been increased up to the 10-mill charter limit, based on the current 8 mill rate.

THE PROPOSED \$16.6-million 1985-86 budget represents a 6.64 percent increase over the city's current \$15.6-million budget.

A portion of the projected increase in the city's budget is due to the proposed hiring of six new full-time employees. Another expected increase in expenditures is due to an estimated \$90,000 increase in the city's general liability insurance.

The fire department's expenses also are expected to increase approximately 18 percent because of paid call-back wages and man hours.

"The budget does acknowledge the increase of incident responses made during 1984, which grew some 10 percent over 1983 and anticipates a continuation of growth and demand for service in this area," according to Costick's report on the proposed budget.

Other increases are expected to come in the purchase of supplies and materials and other expenses related to day-to-day operation of the city, all of which are expected to increase

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RANDY DORST/staff photographer

### Martial arts fest

Over 900 Judo enthusiasts from across the U.S. gathered on the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College to participate in the

National U.S. Judo Championships. For the rest of the story, please turn to page 3C.

## Warrant issued in car deaths

By Julie Brown  
staff writer

A warrant was issued Monday for a Birmingham woman in connection with an auto accident in which two West Bloomfield sisters were killed.

"We received a warrant from the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office charging Laura Pinks," said Lt. Ernie Miller, head of the traffic division for the Farmington Hills police. "It's a four-count warrant."

The warrant includes two counts of manslaughter, a felony carrying a penalty of 15 years and/or a \$7,500 fine, Miller said. It also includes two counts of felonious driving, a felony carrying a penalty of two years and/or a \$1,000 fine.

"We're just getting ahold of her now, advising her and asking her to come in and see us," Miller said Tuesday.

The two sisters, Vanessa Carloni, 16, and Lara Carloni, 15, died March 10 when the car they were riding in collided with a car driven by Pinks, 21. The accident occurred on Farmington Road near Heritage Hills Drive, just south of 14 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

"Felonious driving is for the two injured boys," Miller said. Brian Smith, the driver of the car in which the Carloni girls were riding, was injured as was another passenger in Smith's car, Michael Altman.

ALTMAN REMAINS in guarded condition at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, Russ Tuttle, director

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## Leaders powwow on road project

By Julie Brown  
staff writer

State, local and county officials met Tuesday in an attempt to ease the path toward repaving and widening the 12 Mile corridor.

"We know the problems are there," Farmington Hills Mayor Jan Dolan told those at the meeting. "Obviously, it's a very important issue in Farmington Hills."

The 12 Mile road has become the center of governmental discussion since the building boom during which several office buildings have been constructed in the area between Halsted and Orchard Lake Roads.

The study meeting was held at the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. Building in Farmington Hills. Farmington Hills City Manager Wil-

liam Costick got the discussion started, covering various studies and planning efforts that have been done to date.

Several studies of 12 Mile Road were done throughout the 1970s, the city manager said. In 1980, a joint task force for Novi and Farmington Hills was formed to study improvements of the road, which is under the jurisdiction of the Oakland County Road Commission.

"They recognized the need to develop long-range plans both for Novi and for Farmington Hills," Costick said of the task force.

IN 1983, FARMINGTON HILLS came up with a proposal to do a study "to utilize all the data and update it." That study was financed by the city's Economic Development Corp.

"This study led to the formation of this kind of assembly," Costick said. "The idea is to exchange information." Tom Blaisell, Farmington Hills' director of public services, gave a report on the status of the 12 Mile Road master plan study.

The study was designed "to come up with a master plan for Farmington Hills along this corridor," looking at area development "and determining the type of 12 Mile Road improvements that are required."

Completion of the study has been delayed until information from a state study of the I-696 corridor was available, he said.

"We now have the state study, and we now have the funds for the 12 Mile project," Blaisell said.

"We had put together the preliminary information," City Manager Costick said after the meeting. "We have a lot of data collected. What our final report says will in part have to integrate some of the other agencies' studies."

The proposed 12 Mile Road project calls for widening and improvement of the road between Farmington Road and a point 1,000 feet east of Orchard Lake Road.

"The grant has been awarded and we're working on the project," Costick said.

Robert Adams, a representative of the Michigan Department of Transportation, also spoke at the meeting. Adams, deputy director, bureau of transportation planning, gave an update on the state department's study of the I-696 corridor.

Adams discussed possible locations for an additional interchange for the expressway.

"We anticipate that the opening up of the I-496 portion that is under construction now will set up a ring road around Detroit." The development that will follow will create additional traffic.

The "ideal" expressway would be one with no interchanges, but that design is hardly a realistic one, he said.

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### oral quarrel

## How do you feel about Reagan's Bitburg visit?

President Ronald Reagan intends to visit a German military cemetery where 49 SS soldiers are buried, despite opposition from Congress, Jewish groups and veterans' organizations.

Reagan has said the purpose of his visit next Sunday is to symbolize "the great reconciliation that has taken place" between the U.S. and Germany

in the years following World War II. Today's Oral Quarrel question is: What do you think of the president's decision to visit the cemetery at Bitburg?

To answer this question, call 477-5498. You'll have until 1 p.m. on Friday to answer. Look in Monday's Farmington Observer to see how your neighbors feel about this issue.

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