



Farmington Observer

Volume 96 Number 61

Thursday, May 9, 1985

Farmington, Michigan

74 Pages

Twenty-five cents

Budget up 6.6 percent in the Hills

By Julie Brown
staff writer

It's not the most lively reading around, but the recommended annual budget for Farmington Hills does give a sense of where the money comes from and where it goes.

The recommended operating budget for 1985-86 was presented to the Farmington Hills City Council at the April 29 meeting.

The document lists the recommended budgets for the city's various departments, including salaries. (See related story.) It covers the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1985 and ending June 30, 1986.

The proposed General Fund expenditures recommended total \$16,647,137, an increase of 6.64 percent over the operating budget of \$15,609,188 for 1984-85.

The budget proposes an 8-mill increase, which would raise the current eight mill tax rate to 8.8 in 1985-86.

The proposed 8.8 mills consists of 7.7 mills for operations and debt, the same rate as was levied this year. The remaining 1.1 mills would be used for projects listed in the city's capital improvements program.

The budget includes approximately \$1.6 million for an unappropriated fund balance.

"It's roughly 10 percent of the budget," said City Manager William Costick. "It's been a generally accepted accounting principle."

THE UNAPPROPRIATED fund balance could be used for expenses associated with a natural disaster, such as a flood or tornado.

Pie charts in the recommended budget indicate where the money comes from and where it goes. Recommended general fund budget expenditures include the following:

- Police Department, \$5,374,031, 32.3 percent;
- Administration and general government, \$3,081,104, 18.5 percent;
- Public Services, \$2,990,903, 18 percent;
- Fire Department, \$1,322,076, 7.9 percent;
- Library, \$1,051,212, 6.3 percent;
- Refuse Removal, \$1,034,187, 6.2 percent;
- Special Services, \$921,050, 5.5 percent;
- District Court, \$508,351, 3.1 percent.

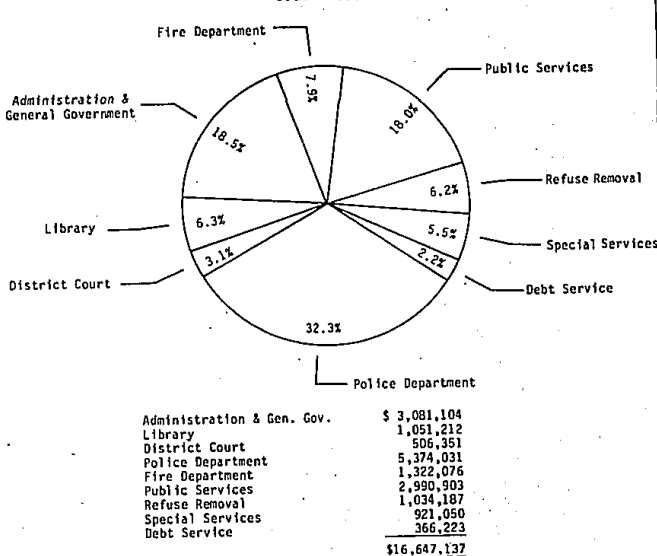
The proposed budget includes a net reduction of \$7,500 from the 1984-85 allocation for the city clerk's office.

"In the even years, you have more expenses for elections," Costick said. "In the odd years, local elections are held, so we have reduced costs."

THE PROPOSED budget for the city clerk's office provides for the September primary and the November ballot to elect four city council members.

The budget also proposes an increase of some \$50,000 over 1984-85 for the city's general liability insurance.

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
GENERAL FUND BUDGET EXPENDITURES
1985 - 1986



The insurance industry is saying local units of government "have experienced a higher degree of exposure, have been sued more," Costick said.

"This is a general thing that's occurring to all municipalities, not just us." Growth in construction has also affected the budget.

"We're in the biggest building boom we've ever been in," Costick said.

The Assessing Department's budget, for example, includes one new position, that of an assessor III for commercial and industrial appraisals.

"We weren't doing an adequate job of keeping up" with the growth, Costick said.

The proposed budget also calls for the addition of one building inspector

and several other new full-time positions: one account clerk I in finance and three police department positions (a sergeant, a police officer and a clerk typist I for the records division).

A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held May 22. The budget must be adopted by June 10, the council's first regular meeting of the month.

Who makes how much?

The following salaries are included in the 1985-86 annual budget recommendation for the city of Farmington Hills:

- City council salaries, \$13,500 (\$1,800 per council member, \$2,700 for mayor);
- City manager, \$52,000;
- Assistant to city manager, \$32,940;
- Finance director/treasurer, \$46,100;
- Controller, \$33,200;
- City assessor, \$40,265;
- Assistant city assessor, \$32,500;
- City clerk, \$39,501;
- Deputy clerk, \$35,514;
- Chief of police, \$45,544;
- Fire chief, \$43,200;
- Director of public services, \$46,910;
- Assistant to public services director, \$32,240;
- Chief building inspector, \$27,928;
- Zoning office supervisor, \$30,558;
- Community development manager, \$36,046;
- Building maintenance supervisor, \$27,511;
- City engineer, \$44,990;
- Chief engineering inspector, \$29,219;
- Senior engineer, \$34,276;
- D.P.W. superintendent, \$37,492;
- Director of special services, \$43,200;
- Assistant director of special services, \$30,558;
- Parks maintenance supervisor, \$22,445.

The salary recommendations represent increases of 3 to 4 percent, said City Manager William Costick.

"That's generally the amount that's been budgeted. Our salaries have been way down," the city manager said. "If you want to keep people, you have to pay them decently." Salaries must be competitive, not only with other units of government but also with private industry. "We're competing, and I guess we always will be," Costick said.

Health experts say no to legislator's plan

By Joanne Maliszowski
staff writer

Medical officials are doubtful that legislation recently introduced into the state House which would require physicians to obtain patients' signed consent before giving diagnostic tests would help contain growing health care costs.

"Our board of directors questioned whether it would actually achieve the objectives of the bill," said Kevin Kelly, manager of the department of governmental relations for the Michigan Medical Society.

Introduced in early April by Rep. Wilbur (Sandy) Brotherton, R-Farmington, the bill requires physicians and other medical personnel to obtain a patient's signed consent, including a description and costs of tests to be administered.

"The purpose is to alert patients to the number of tests and costs that are being conducted," Brotherton said. "The patient has no idea what the heck is going on."

Medical personnel would be required to list the cost of each test even if the patient's insurance will pay the majority of the bill, Brotherton said. Under the bill, physicians and hospital personnel would not be required to explain the results of the tests, Brotherton added.

Attempting to avoid duplication of

diagnostic tests is a second purpose of the bill.

Often a physician will conduct some tests while the patient is in the office. The patient will later be sent to the hospital for more tests. But more often than not, the hospital duplicates the tests taken by the physician in the office, Brotherton said.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE is the general practitioner who conducts tests and sends the patient to a specialist who will run the same series of tests again, Brotherton said.

"In some instances, the same darn test is run again by that specialist," she said. "I admit it's OK to be done. But let the patient know."

Jane Eckels, public affairs manager for the Southeast Michigan Hospital Council, acknowledged that diagnostic tests are often duplicated. But she approaches the issue from another angle.

"Duplication, confirmation. That's what is now being called defensive medicine," Eckels said.

Physicians and hospitals often duplicate tests to confirm a diagnosis, she said. That's for the benefit of the patient as well as for the legal protection of both physician and hospitals, Eckels continued.

With malpractice cases and insurance costs continually increasing, phy-

'The purpose is to alert patients to the number of tests and costs that are being conducted. The patient has no idea of what the heck is going on.'

— Sandy Brotherton
state representative

sicians double check to be sure for their own legal protection, she said.

When a medical technician, for example, takes only one tube of blood, most patients assume that means one test would be conducted, not the eight to 10 they find out about when the bill comes, Brotherton added.

"It's really cost containment," he said, referring to HB 4535.

But officials representing medical and hospital associations disagree.

"As far as hospitals are generally concerned, if it were just for safety, we'd have no problem with it," Eckels said.

By Joanne Maliszowski
staff writer

All it seems to take is a serious accident and the questions begin. Inevitably someone will ask how a minor got his or her hands on a six-pack of beer or a bottle of wine or liquor.

The answer is simple. There are enough fake identification

cards and altered drivers' licenses to go around to the kids who really want to buy liquor. And in many cases these fake IDs are honored.

"It's done a lot," said Sgt. Richard Murphy of the Farmington Hills Police Department's juvenile division. In fact, the fake ID business is big business.

A teen-ager walks into a store to buy some beer, the clerk may or may not

"The industry feels the Brotherton bill is really an effort to get the patients to know. But it treats the symptoms, not the problems," Eckels added.

Because of insurance coverage, most patients don't care about the costs of tests, Eckels said.

"The incentive isn't there so there is no incentive because it's not coming out of their pocket," she continued.

Requiring physicians and hospitals, as well as nursing homes, to obtain signed consent as well as a listing of the description and costs of tests is going to add paperwork and consequently additional costs, Eckels said.

Kelly of the Michigan Medical Society, which represents physicians, including both medical doctors and osteopaths, agreed.

"The Michigan Medical Society board of directors has taken a position of opposition to HB 4535," Kelly said. "It's questioned whether it's really logistically possible," he said, about a physician taking time to describe the nature of the tests and the costs. "It could take a great deal of time to describe. What effect would that have?"

Besides attempting to contain costs, Brotherton claims the effect of his bill, should it become law, is to educate patients.

paths, agreed.

"The Michigan Medical Society board of directors has taken a position of opposition to HB 4535," Kelly said.

"It's questioned whether it's really logistically possible," he said, about a physician taking time to describe the nature of the tests and the costs. "It could take a great deal of time to describe. What effect would that have?"

Besides attempting to contain costs, Brotherton claims the effect of his bill, should it become law, is to educate patients.

PATIENTS SHOULD ASK their physicians about tests and test results, according to the bill.

Please turn to Page 8

Crackdown sought on fake ID

By Joanne Maliszowski
staff writer

All it seems to take is a serious accident and the questions begin. Inevitably someone will ask how a minor got his or her hands on a six-pack of beer or a bottle of wine or liquor.

The answer is simple. There are enough fake identification

cards and altered drivers' licenses to go around to the kids who really want to buy liquor. And in many cases these fake IDs are honored.

"It's done a lot," said Sgt. Richard Murphy of the Farmington Hills Police Department's juvenile division. In fact, the fake ID business is big business.

A teen-ager walks into a store to buy some beer, the clerk may or may not

ask for ID, Murphy said.

If the clerk wants to see some proof of age the teen-ager pulls out a drivers' license and a date that's been altered, he said. Or the teen-ager could have purchased an identification card that contains false information, particularly the birth date.

In many cases, the license of an older person is used, and the teen-ager

will paste his own photograph over the real photograph, Murphy said.

"They will do all kinds of alterations," he added.

Recent state law prohibiting the sale of alcohol to anyone under the age of 21, state law also prohibits the use of

Please turn to Page 12

what's inside

Community calendar . . . 4B
Club circuit 2B
Cable connection 2B
Creative Living Section E
Editorials 16A
Obituaries 16A
Recreation news 4A
Sports Section C
Suburban Life Section B
NEWSLINE 477-5450
HOME DELIVERY . 691-0500
CLASSIFIED ADS . 691-0900

HOMES
of the finest
distinction

CREATIVE LIVING
REAL ESTATE SECTION
IN TODAY'S ISSUE

oral quarrel

How do you feel about closing the bleachers?

Foul language has gotten the "bleacher creatures" at Tiger Stadium into hot water.

The management of the Detroit Tigers recently decided to close the stadium's bleacher section. Obscene language used by some of the fans was the reason given for the decision.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is: What do you think of the decision to close the bleachers at Tiger Stadium?

To answer this question, call 477-5498 before 1 p.m. Friday. See Monday's Farmington Observer to see how your neighbors responded to this question.

Study launched on downtown

An effort to repopulate downtown Farmington's vital functions — living, working, shopping, dining, leisure, entertainment and business — will begin at an open forum at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 15, in City Hall, according to City Manager Robert F. Deadman.

Christopher Wascny, city planner and urban designer, and Nick Nicholas, market analyst, will address the question of how the city will position itself for growth in the years ahead. Wascny & McKenna Associates and Nicholas & Co. are currently developing market and design strategies for towns and cities throughout Michigan.

Three specific areas will be addressed at the open forum meeting Wednesday by planners:

- the formation of a CBD organization;
- the undertaking of a marketing and functional strategy for the CBD, this would deal with a qualified rather than a quantified approach to the market; the evaluation of current and anticipated trends in Farmington, existing functions and the competition and the potential for change.

Please turn to Page 14