

Schools drop suit against Hills

By Casey Hans
staff writer

The Farmington school board voted Tuesday to dismiss a suit, without prejudice, against the city of Farmington Hills. The suit was filed Feb. 12 in an effort to halt formation of a tax increment financing authority (TIFA).

Trustees present voted unani-

mously in favor of the decision, with no discussion. John Cotton was absent.

The board vote follows action taken March 24 by the Farmington Hills City Council rescinding formation of a TIFA district along a 3.5-mile stretch of 12 Mile Road, west of Farmington Road.

The Farmington Public Schools suit was one of two in Oakland County

being observed statewide by municipalities and school districts for possible precedent-setting action. Legal action by Birmingham Public Schools against the Village of Beverly Hills to halt use of proposed tax increment financing in the village's Downtown Development Authority is still pending.

In other areas, the city of Westland and the Livonia School District

reached a tentative agreement last week, allowing for creation of a TIFA district in the Warren Road/Newburgh area. Already approved by the school district, the issue goes before the Westland City Council May 19.

LIVONIA SCHOOLS, like Farmington, is an out-of-formula district, which does not receive general state

school aid based on a per-pupil formula. Local dollars fund the operational budgets of these districts.

The Farmington district's suit maintained the Farmington Hills TIFA was illegal, based on a January opinion given by Michigan's Attorney General and previously requested by the district.

The suit maintained there was no decline in property values along 12 Mile, that the operating millage could not legally be captured for purposes other than school-related items, and that allowing a TIFA would breach the district's contract with bondholders to levy all taxable property in the district.

Under the TIFA financing mechanism, property values in the designated district are frozen. Tax increment money is derived from the increase in assessed valuations in the district over the initial value at the time the TIFA plan is implemented.

Farmington Hills had proposed taking such money for up to 12 years, in a sharing plan with the school district.

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Schools to give pink slips to 9 teachers

Nine secondary teachers will receive pink slips this week as a result of action taken by the Farmington school board Tuesday.

It was the smallest termination list considered by school officials in the last 13 years, according to Robert Coleman, director of personnel for the district.

Officials said they hope to recall the teachers before the end of this school year, pending a count of teachers returning from leave,

placement of involuntary teacher transfers and notice of retirement from other teachers.

Coleman said he hopes to have figures compiled and an answer for the terminated teachers in about one week.

THE NINE have seniority dates from April 1976 to January 1986. They are: Elizabeth Martin, Diane Rogers, Joette Morden, Corazon Lawton, Dolores Curiel, Marjorie

Powell, Deborah Eason, Mark Babcock and Marie Aratari.

The terminations take effect at the end of this school year.

Termination action is required by the board according to the terms of the contract between Farmington Public Schools and the Farmington Education Association and due to declining enrollment, according to an administrative report presented to the board.

Such a termination list is routinely presented to the board annually. Last year, for the first time in the school district's history, all teachers from the termination list were recalled, Coleman said.

Trustee James Abernethy voiced concern, due to the new school employee retirement law that allows earlier retirement benefits and puts districts throughout the state in competition for good teachers.

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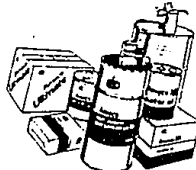
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