

Personnel, trash removal costs boost Hills budget

By Joanna Maliszewski
staff writer

City employees and garbage removal will cost Farmington Hills taxpayers more in 1989-90.

"Being a service-oriented organization, our major costs are in wages and benefits," finance director Charles Rosch said. The city's proposed \$22.2 million budget for the new fiscal year, beginning July 1, represents a 9.1-percent increase over the current 1988-89 budget. The proposed budget would be supported by an 0.8-mill tax — a 0.1-percent rollback designed to offset increased property tax assessments.

Personnel services represent 57 percent, or \$15 million, of the proposed \$26.2 million budget. Increasing refuse costs represent 11 percent of the proposed city budget's overall 9.1-percent increase over the 1988-89 budget, Rosch said.

Employee wages are expected to increase 4 percent — according to existing labor contracts with the city's six labor unions. But a major increase in the coming year will be seen in employee health insurance benefits.

"We're not the only community going through this experience," City Manager William Costick said.

MICHIGAN BLUE Cross/Blue Shield increased rates 28 percent, or \$249,000, for 1989-90. In 1988-89, insurance rates increased 30 percent.

"As a portion of total wages paid to employees, this represents the equivalent of an approximate 2.7-percent increase in wage costs to city government at large," according to the proposed budget summary.

Costick has promised to investigate alternatives to either stabilize, if not decrease, health insurance

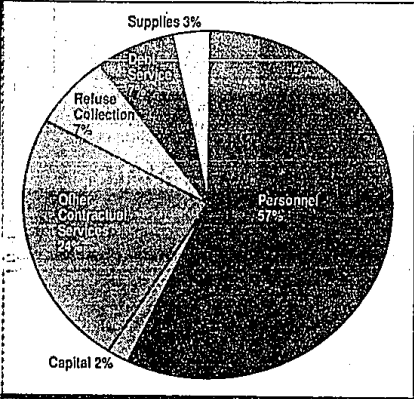
premium costs. The Michigan Municipal League, for example, is developing a group health insurance program that might be suitable for the city, Costick said.

CAUTIOUS ABOUT adding new employees, despite booming growth and increased workload in the past few years, Costick this year is proposing hiring seven new employees.

The proposed budget includes two new police officers, one for patrol and traffic, and another for the detective bureau, and one full-time firefighter. The budget also includes the hiring of a foreman in the Department of Public Works, an additional building inspector, a librarian, and converting a part-time person to full-time in the personnel office.

Costick's hiring proposal actually is a reduction in the number of employees requested by city departments. The police department requested 10 employees and DPW requested three.

Farmington Hills - where the money goes



MIRRORING PAST years, the city's garbage disposal costs are again increasing from \$1.5 million in 1986-89 to \$1.8 million in 1988-90. The greatest increases are in tipping fees or the cost of disposing garbage at landfills. In the past 15 years, tipping fees have increased 1,000 percent, Costick said.

"It has been predicted that within the next four to eight years, that Oakland County and the entire metropolitan area will be experiencing a serious shortage of landfill sites unless alternative measures are undertaken," Costick said.

The six-community Southwest Oakland County Solid Waste Consortium, of which Farmington Hills is a member, has studied the garbage issue and will present a final report Wednesday, May 17, at the Southfield Civic Center.

The proposed budget, which takes advantage of increased revenue on only new construction in the city, will be balanced with approximately \$341,000 in surplus money. That leaves approximately \$2.5 million in surplus, a little less than the 10 percent recommended by Wall Street analysts for good credit rating, Rosch said.



On the set

Actor David Selby (right), who portrays Richard Channing on the CBS nighttime soap "Falcon Crest," shares a laugh with TV 2 reporter Theresa Lukenas on the set of "Falcon Crest," while TV 2 cameraman Mike Shore records. Lukenas and Shore, both of Farmington Hills, were in Los Angeles pre-

paring a series of special reports called "Riding the Falcon Crest," airing on TV 2 Eyewitness News at 11 p.m. May 12 and 19. While in L.A., Lukenas also talked to the cast of "Knot's Landing" for her show "Tied in Knots," airing on TV 2 Eyewitness News at 11 tonight and May 18.

Chief: Toughen DUI penalties

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register with people. I don't think it's necessarily increasing penalties, but ensuring the certainty of a penalty," Dolan said.

IN ADDITION to mandatory minimum fines, Dwyer recommended escalating maximum penalties for each subsequent offense. On second and third offenses, Dwyer proposed that drunken driving convictions in other states count against drivers here. "If you live in Ohio and are convicted of driving under the influence and you move here, it would count. Under the current

law, these convictions can't be used against you in this state," he said.

Dwyer also would like to set a specific length of time for detoxification after arrests, prohibit plea bargaining and begin a training program for liquor servers.

"The thrust of this training would address the signs of detoxification and its effect on the individual, the server's obligation under the law, and potential civil exposure of the employee/employers, and the ramifications to the intoxicated individual should they leave driving a motor vehicle," Dwyer said.

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