Council discusses judge's hiring practices

by Susan Buck staff writer

New Judge Fred Harris' hiring practices dominated a sometimespointed discussion as the city council monday approved amending Farmington Hills' portion of the 47th District Court's 1988-95 budget.

The budget amendment will cost the city 43,390.

The retirement of Judge Michael Hand in April resulted in unaulcipated costs as court duties were turned over to Harris, a Farmington Hills attorney and former Oakland County Road Commission chairman. His term runs to Jan. 1, 1991.

Vistling judges and substitute ceurt reporters during the transition period increased the court's operating cost. "Our visiting judges were not as carrell or as carried in appointing court-uppointed counsel; said presiding Judge Margaret Schaelfer.

Increased expenditures of \$14,000.

said presiding Judge Margaret signed to improve courthouse securischaeffer.

Increased expenditures of \$14,000 and \$100. Formington Hills share of \$11,400. Formington Hills share of the overrun is \$3,930, or about \$2 percent of the total.

The court also incurred \$5,500 for recording equipment installed in The court administrator, John Ferry, Jr., has requested through the court administrator's office a supplemental request to the state legislature to relimburse the court for this state to relimburse the court for this state of the state of the

not certain.
MUCH OF Monday's city council

MUCH OF Monday's city council discussion about the court focused on Hurri's hiring practices.
Harris hiring practices.
Harris lired yeteran court reporter Citody Hage two months before she would have been vested in been sound to be the council of Farmington Hills.
"I think that anyone familiar with my background knows that with an issue like that, I'm super sensitive," Harris sald, was not awar again the council of the cou

'We've had some ethics problems in the city. Even though this is a shorttime situation, it's a questionable situation. We used to call this nepotism, where you hire a member of your own family.'

> – Jean Fox Farmington Hills councilwoman

We used to call this nepotism, where
you hire a member of your own familly. Couldn't the court officer have
stayed or couldn't some other people
in the community have handled it?"
Councilman Paul Sowerby said it

terim basis, it seems not to be logi-

terim basis, it seems not to be logical."

HARRIS was appointed by Gov.

James Blanchard and took the oath
of office May 1. He was put on the
payroll May 3 and was formally
sworn in May 23. During May,
Harris "learned" to become a judge
by working in courtrooms in Walted
Lake, Livonia and Plymouth.

"It's true that we had Judge
Harris' salary for May and also a
visiting judge's," said Schaeffer. "He
had to have other lawyers take his
cases. He had to talk to his clients.

"If anybody's at fault, I'll have to
kake the rap for that," she selents.

"If anybody's at fault, I'll have to
kake the rap for that," she seen coordinated
better, "The widdom of Judge
Harris' decision will come," said
Sowerby.

Harris said he previously met with the city manager and the chief of police about bringing a uniformed police officer about the continuous as a policity as possible." The howe a uniformed police officer in the courthouse as a policity as possible." The way as the continuous of the continuous of the continuous from time to time when we've needed the presence of a police officer. Nobody has that authority, ability, capacity and know-how to put handeuffs on anybody and put him into a holding cell," said Harris. He said that he offered that position to a police officer who was near retirement, but that officer was concerned how that would affect his pension.

"We wish none of this had reached the notoriety stage," said council.

Time capsule to be buried at picnic

The Committee on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution will conclude this year's Farmington/Farmington Hills Founders Festival activities with a patriotic event.

At 4:30 p.m. Sunday (not Saturday, as reported in Monday's Observer) in

as reported in Monday's Observer) in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park,

the committee will host an old-fash-ioned plenic. The Franklin Village Band, conducted by Dr. Conrad Lam, will be featured. At the conclusion of this plenic, people may contribute items that re-

people may contribute items that re-flect the true flavor of the Farming-ton Hills/Farmington area to a time

Gigantic

capsule. The capsule will be opened on the 260th anniversary of the ratiby John Philip Sousa. George M. John Philip Sousa. George M. This event will be held in the pinnic grove at Heritage Park, on Paramington Road, between 10 and 11 Mille. Guests may bring a picnic distinct in the Farmington area.

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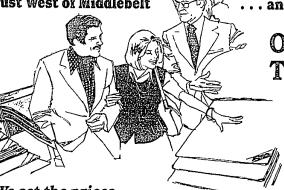
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