

Hills plans review of city attorney's services

By Joanne Malliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills city attorney Paul Bibeau says he doesn't mind that his services and work performance are to be reviewed, even though the city council will also consider other law firms.

"My experience is that it's not common (for municipalities) to call in other attorneys. But I don't think it's a bad thing to take a look at comparable services," Bibeau said. The city council will begin reviewing both the city attorney and city planning consultant Claude Coates as soon as city manager William Costick determines which law firms

and consulting firms should be invited to make presentations.

But council members Nancy Bates and Jonathan Grant, two of the three newest council members, opposed the reviews and inviting other firms for presentations.

Speaking specifically about Bibeau's firm, Larson, Wright, Harms & Bibeau, which represents the city, Grant said he doesn't feel he has served on the council long enough to review legal services or Bibeau's work. Grant was elected Nov. 7, 1989.

BIBEAU JOINED the new law firm early last year after he disbanded his firm, Brennan, Bibeau & Pochlman. Last July, the new

firm was given a one-year contract, which expires June 30.

When the contract was given, council members agreed to review the firm and open the job to presentations from other firms by early 1990.

But Grant said Monday he has received mixed signals from his council colleagues. Either the reviews are routine policy or "we are reviewing because we are dissatisfied with the current service," he said.

Some council members said they were satisfied with the law firm's service. Others said there have been enough questions about the services in the past year that a review is needed.

"There have been some problems," Mayor Jean Fox said, referring to a controversy last spring over trees cut down by Harold Larson a week before the city's new tree protection ordinance took effect.

Other council members, such as Terry Sever, said he is satisfied with Bibeau's and the new firm's work. "I think it's unfair to sit here and make comments about our current counsel," he said.

SEVER SAID a review will reaffirm the good service he believes the law firm is providing. "That process will show we are get-

ting a pretty good bang for our buck," Sever said.

Councilman Ben Marks argued for the need to review city advisers, including the attorney, to let the public know the council is "not always staying with the status quo."

Councilman Lawrence Lichtman said he supports the city attorneys, but believes more than a one-year contract should be given so attorneys can plan their services. "I agree. I don't want to go into this thing looking for flaws in the armor of Larson, Wright, Harms & Bibeau."

Public meetings with any new law or planning firms have not yet been scheduled.

Crackdown irks liquor licensees

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The city council Monday postponed action on the proposal to give Aho time to clarify the document's language.

"It (sale to minors) is something that has to be stopped now before it becomes a crisis. Our community can be the leader," said councilman Terry Sever, who was instrumental in developing the new efforts.

Matley said he and other licensees expect to offer public comments Feb. 12, even though a public hearing is not required for ordinance adoption.

"This is not a zoning text change so a public hearing is not necessary," city attorney Paul Bibeau said.

The proposed ordinance and other strong efforts stem from city officials' disappointment over what they say is a poor record by liquor licensees in the city's undercover liquor law crackdowns.

IN THE latest Dec. 15 undercover operation, 16 restaurants and bars and two package liquor stores were ticketed for selling alcohol to an undercover police cadet younger than 21, the legal drinking age.

As stated in the proposed ordi-

nance, city officials are expected to investigate the city's 83 liquor licensees as they come up for renewal in April.

"An analysis should be prepared of which licensees are causing a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the community by repeatedly selling alcohol to minors," Aho said. Following the investigations, city administrators are expected to set public hearings for those licensees deemed "unfit to maintain the privilege of selling alcohol" in the city.

Following a public hearing, which Aho suggested should be scheduled when there is no regular city council meeting, council members would decide whether a liquor license should be revoked. The council could also put a licensee on probation or work out a compromise, Aho added.

LICENSEES WOULD be allowed to bring their attorneys to the public hearings, provide evidence and "confront any adverse witnesses," Aho suggested the city council should deliberate carefully and not make a decision immediately following the public hearing.

"There's so much involved. It would be my hope that if you take

Hills shapes fight against sale to minors

By Joanne Malliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills City Council's decision to revoke liquor licenses isn't the only weapon to be used in the fight against selling alcohol to minors.

"Selling to minors is a significant problem. It's a problem we have not been effectively dealing with in the past. All of these new efforts are ap-

propriate and will assist us in curtailing the sale to minors," Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said.

City officials will take the following action:

• The city attorney will aggressively prosecute, in the 47th District Court in Farmington, licensees who sell to minors. The aggressive prosecution includes no pleas to lesser charges without a complete statement of the incident and what ef-

forts a licensee made to prevent an employee from selling to minors.

• The city's special counsel will appear at each Michigan Liquor Control Commission hearing to encourage the suspension of licenses on a first violation of selling to minors. Liquor control commissioners will be encouraged to give substantial suspension, including revocation, for repeat offenders.

In the city's undercover liquor law

crackdowns, violators are charged under local ordinance and state law, which is enforced by the liquor control commission.

• The city will require that all licensees have all employees who sell alcoholic beverages attend mandatory training at the Farmington Hills Police Department. Four programs are scheduled for March with a training program planned for each month after that, Dwyer said.

Tech company upgrades training

The Farmington Hills-based Advanced Center for Technology Training has revised its curriculum to meet the needs of more public school districts, the company announced.

Since 1985, ACTT has been an independent company that works with

local and county school districts, community colleges and companies across the country, offering hands-on technology training.

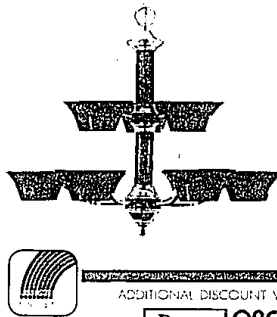
New instructional units have been developed to use with existing school courses in mathematics, physics, so-

cial studies and technology education. Each package contains a student workbook, curriculum guides and instructional aids for teachers.

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