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Farmington approves rise in impact fees

by Shalyn Roberts

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FARMINGTON — Farmington City council members approved raising impact fees Tuesday night to help pay for a new fire truck and equipment, as well as well line repairs and an increase in the costs of water meters with a 3-1 vote and one absentee.

The fire, water, and parks capital facilities lists were each amended with costs going up from the fire and water purchases. Farmington City manager Max Forbush said the load for the city's new platform fire truck and equipment would stretch out over about 15 years. He said that equipment would be bought over time.

"The city needs a ladder truck as our buildings get taller," said Forbush.

The changes mainly affect non-residential development, but city council members were uneasy about the way the fee schedule is currently set up.

"I don't think the fee schedule is fair," said city council member Jim Talbot, who gave the one nay vote to the issue. "I'm not in opposition to protecting Farmington, and I'm not in opposition to the apparatus."

Aside from the new truck, Farmington City is also beginning to plan for a second station in west Farmington. The loan would help the city buy land, but no more than that. The building itself will be paid for via other funds in the future.

Talbot gave the example that apartment buildings are typically three stories high and would need the ladder truck more than commercial buildings in the event of a fire, yet the commercial areas are the ones affected by the rise.

"I think we need to re-work that," he said.

However, Mayor Scott Harbertson pointed out that at this point, it's a state law that prevents changes in the impact fee schedule. "It'd be a matter of changing the law," he said.

Talbot was also concerned about the interest rate from the truck, which will build over 15 years. He suggested the city try to pay it off more quickly. "I just think that \$400,000 could be better spent elsewhere in the city," he said.

"The water fees aren't as drastic," said Harbertson as the council voted to approve those fee increases as well.

Aside from the fire and water fees, city council members also approved an amendment to the park & recreation capital facilities plan list to include more projects that can be paid for. "There's enough projects in there that there's no way the impact fees will pay for it all," said Forbush about the park & recreation list.

"I think the projects listed are very appropriate, but I think we'll need to discuss

carefully the impact on the community,” said council member Sid Young.

The new fee schedule itself will be available via the city.

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