

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

Vol. 4

APRIL, 1927

Number 10

TOWNSHIP EXPENDITURES AGAIN INCREASE

The annual financial statement of the township government distributed at the election, April 4th, should be given more than passing attention by taxpayers of Grosse Pointe and by persons generally who are interested in the cost of local government. The statement of twenty pages setting forth in detail the expenditures of the township is not an audit but is represented by the township auditor to be "taken from and in accordance with the books of the township of Grosse Pointe." In the past an audit has been made after issuing the financial statement but has not been published. Inasmuch as the present statement is the only one printed for distribution, the Citizens' Association is again following its practice of giving a general analysis of the published report. The manner in which the report is presented this year makes it impossible, without complete re-arrangement, to determine the total amount spent for different township services. The mass of detail is given without reference to any classification or order other than the date on which the voucher was drawn. Disbursements for various township activities, salaries, supplies, etc., are not grouped and, in fact, are practically impossible to obtain accurately from the report. A careful grouping of some of the items of expenditures made by the Citizens' Association brings to light several total figures of significance.

As to receipts, the report shows that for the funds used for operation of the township government, that is the General Fund, Highway Fund, Poor Fund and Contingent Fund, \$84,734.90 was received, while \$85,089.89 was expended. The township, therefore, spent \$354.99 more than its current income. A similar condition was found in the Financial Report of last year, when current expenditures exceeded receipts by \$503.47.

A comparison of receipts and expenditures for the year just closed and for a year ago is given below. The statement excludes transfers to school district and health district funds, because they are not under direct control of township officers and further excludes the sinking fund because of its special nature.

	1925-6	1926-7
Opening Balance, April 1.....	\$ 73,153.14	\$ 72,149.49
Receipts		
Current Taxes	73,879.28	44,767.76
Personal Taxes, Not on Tax Roll.....		150.80
Delinquent Taxes	27,514.62	22,132.86
Interest on Bond from City of Detroit.....	1,552.12	3,776.21
Interest on Bank Balances.....	3,893.56	2,982.47
Interest on Bonds (Sinking Fund Earnings)	1,000.00	2,106.26
Refunds		193.51
County Drain Commissioner.....		300.00
Candidates Filing Fees and Recount....		183.00
Hall Rent		30.00
Tax Collection Fees	8,687.59	8,112.03
Miscellaneous	52.10	
Total Receipts	\$116,579.27	\$ 84,734.90
Total to be Accounted For.....	\$189,732.41	\$156,884.39

	Disbursements	
	1925-6	1926-7
Transfers to Other Than Township Funds	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Transfers to Sinking Fund.....	51,000.00	
Total Transfers	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Disbursements for Township Purposes	63,082.74	85,089.89
Total	\$117,082.74	\$120,089.89

This consolidated statement shows that while current receipts fell from \$116,579.90 to \$84,734.90, a decrease of 27 per cent, expenditures increased from \$63,082.74 to \$85,089.89, or more than a third.

An effort was made by the "Civic News" to determine, at least in part, the expenditures that make up this large increase. The figures were obtained after a thorough review of the statement and are believed to be correct within very close limits.

A consolidation of the statement a year ago showed that approximately \$20,181.83 was paid for salaries and fees, while for the year just past it appears that approximately \$26,875.00 was paid. Individual salary items for the two periods follow:

The 1925-6 report shows that for the services of the supervisor and assistant, \$4,180.83 was expended, while for the year just ended \$5,236.16 appears for supervisor's salary and expense and for the salary of an assistant. The salary and expenses of the supervisor, which the report shows, was \$3,157.65 are not segregated, and it is impossible to determine the amount listed as expense. An item of \$78.50 is included for the services of the supervisor of the previous year.

The total salary and expenses of the clerk for 1925-6 are given as \$1,554 only, \$50 of which is listed as expense. For the year just ended \$1,777.20 was expended, \$297.20 of which is listed as expense. A balance of \$55 paid the clerk of the previous year is also included in the total. From the figures in the report, it appears that the clerk received \$30 weekly for his services.

The total services of the treasurer and assistant last year cost \$4,500, while the report for this year shows that the treasurer alone was paid \$5,078.87. What portion of the \$4,500 of the previous year was paid to the treasurer and what portion to his assistant could not be determined because the items are not listed separately in last year's report.

The amount spent for legal services last year was not stated. The amount spent for the present year is \$450.

Fees for election and registration officials more than doubled, going from \$1,976 last year to \$4,147 this year, an increase of \$2,171 or 110 per cent. For the township primary on March 10th, it appears that fees were paid to 55 booth officials to handle the relatively small vote in the four voting districts of the township.

(Continued on Page 4)

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 316 E. Jefferson, Detroit.

H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor.

H. G. Fishack, Editor.

Printed once a month as the official publication of the Citizens Association of Grosse Pointe Township, under the authority of the following board of directors:

H. P. Breitenbach, President.

Wm. M. Mertz, Vice-President.

Raymond K. Dykema, Secretary.

Jos. L. Hickey, Treasurer.

Chas. L. Palms, Jr., Benjamin S. Warren,

C. A. Dean, Jr.

OUR NEW HIGH SCHOOL

The laying of the cornerstone of the Grosse Pointe High School was recently celebrated with appropriate ceremonies, as narrated in another column. Fifty years from now, if some historian should write a chapter on Grosse Pointe, he would doubtless characterize this event as epochal in the history of the township.

For it marks the first worthwhile possession of the people of the township as a whole. True, the new high school will not be the only building belonging to all the residents in common. They already own several other school buildings, but these for the most part are used only by certain sections, according to their respective locations.

The new high school, however, should be and doubtless will be a focus for the entire community. Nearly all the children of high school age should attend it. Fortunately there are few if any families in Grosse Pointe debarred by poverty from sending their sons and daughters through high school.

In the past, some of the wealthier families have deemed it wise to have their children attend private schools in preparation for college. But the new high school should attract these too. It will rank in physical equipment with the best in the country, and its teaching personnel should likewise conform to the highest standards. It will offer, besides, a democratic atmosphere which thoughtful parents appreciate as one of the essentials of the best education.

Nor should the new building be a bond of union merely among the youth of the community. It should bring together the older people too. Its auditorium will be the scene of

many public gatherings. Its gymnasium and swimming pool will be enjoyed by young and old alike. Its library will be at the disposal of all. The new high school building should thus serve as a real community center.

A community divided against itself cannot have a healthy life any more than a divided nation can. Thoughtful observers have noted of late years the growth of a community spirit in Grosse Pointe. The new high school, which in a sense is an expression of that spirit, bids fair to mark a new epoch in its development.

TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

A review of the expenditures made by the township during the past fiscal year, given on page 1 of this issue, raises two questions worthy of the attention of taxpayers. First, has administration of the township during the year just past been economical? Second, what further need remains for the township government?

In considering the question of economy it is interesting to note that in spite of the smaller area of the township due to annexations to Detroit, township expenditures have continually increased during the past three years. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 1925, slightly more than \$52,000 was expended; for the year 1925-6 over \$63,000, for the year just ended expenditures mounted to over \$85,000. Such a sharp upward trend is strongly indicative of extravagance.

Part of the expenditures for salaries and for fees offer comparison with salaries and fees paid by other governments. These comparisons point out that the amounts paid in Grosse Pointe for personal services are very liberal, to say the least. Two examples, given in the following paragraphs bear out this statement.

The financial report shows that \$4,147 was expended in fees for registration and election officials. For the township election in April, 1926, forty-four persons were employed at the rate of \$8.00 and \$16.00 per day, the total expended being \$640.00. For the election in September, 1926, the rates paid were \$8.00, \$20.00 and in numerous cases \$32.00. Fees aggregating \$1,328.00 were paid to 48 persons to operate four election booths—an average of 12 officials to each booth. A total of 2,070 votes was cast, or an aver-

age of 518 for each precinct. In Detroit, where the average vote in the 1924 presidential election was 711 for each voting booth, three to seven election officials were employed and were paid a maximum of \$16.00 a day. A study of 15 large cities of the country showed that no city employed more than 10 officials in each booth and that 11 of the 15 employed six officials or less. Double the number of election officials at double fees in many cases seems to have been the practice in Grosse Pointe Township.

The township treasurer was paid in excess of \$5,000 for part-time services. His principal duty is collecting the township tax between December 10 and March 10, a period of three months with only nominal work during the rest of the fiscal year. The treasurer for the City of Detroit receives \$10,000 yearly for his full time services as head of a department with nearly a hundred employees, handling over 150 million dollars each year.

The second question raised deals with the further need for the township government. With the incorporation of Lochmoor several activities previously under township jurisdiction were taken over by the new village. Highway maintenance and repair, street lighting and police administration became village activities and are no longer a part of the township's work. Its present activities are confined to the following: poor relief, collection of state, county, school, health and township taxes, conducting of state, county and township elections, providing justice courts and minor duties incident to running the township. These duties do not require the constant attention of township officials during every working day of the year.

Although there remains less need today for the township government than formerly, under existing law the township, as a political unit, remains. Perhaps Grosse Pointe Township is the only township in the state whose entire territory is composed of several village corporations. This is not the fault of township officers but the situation does raise the question of whether the law should not provide for a more simple and economical method of administering public affairs where such a situation exists.

However, voluntary reduction of the work performed by the township to the minimum duties necessary to meet

(Continued next Page, Col. 1)

(Continued from Page 2, Col. 3)

the requirements of the present law and a corresponding reduction in township expense to a level consistent with the duties falling on township officers is possible without legal changes in the form of government. In the final analysis taxpayers are little concerned with the form of government or the administrative personnel as long as they know that governmental affairs are efficiently and economically administered.

DEFINITE ACTION IS URGED

The following letter, addressed to the Civic News by Mr. Henry B. Joy and reproduced here with his permission, indicates the need of proper zoning restrictions in the Grosse Pointe villages:

March 15, 1927.

Mr. H. P. Breitenbach, President
Grosse Pointe Civic News,
316 East Jefferson Avenue,
Detroit, Michigan.

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

I feel that the value of the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms to the people of the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms is chiefly that its residential characteristics be perpetuated.

If, by our lack of interest, we permit the establishment of features in the village detrimental to its attractiveness as a residential area, we will be sacrificing for our community a valuable privilege, which it may retain if it chooses.

We have recently had a narrow escape from the establishment of a charitable home on the Lake Shore front, which, many of us feel, might have been the first step—the entering wedge—detrimental to the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms as a residential area.

If this property to which I refer had been taken for the charity, an item of revenue would have been stricken from the tax rolls, and it would have affected all the Grosse Pointe area in taxable value.

There is a zoning ordinance dragging its weary way through processes of development into crystallization. Cannot this be hurried along so that, at least, this safeguard may be wisely developed and promptly adopted as a protection and guarantee to those who desire to build homes in our community, that objectionable features will not be permitted to intrude?

Very sincerely yours,

HBJ:EL

HENRY B. JOY.

The zoning ordinance in Grosse Pointe Farms referred to above has been in preparation for more than eight months, as has the proposed ordinance for Grosse Pointe Village. After a public hearing on the ordinance for Grosse Pointe Farms several weeks ago, it was decided to further restrict the residential area of the village. According to village officials, these restrictions are now being incorporated in the ordinance.

SCHOOL HEAD RESIGNS

The resignation of W. L. Walling, Superintendent of Grosse Pointe Schools since the consolidation of the district four years ago, was tendered and accepted at a special meeting of the School Board on March 24th. At a subsequent meeting, Samuel Miller Brownell, a graduate of the University of Nebraska and of Yale University, was appointed to the superintendency. Mr. Walling's resignation takes effect July 1st, and soon after this date Mr. Brownell will assume active charge.

During Mr. Walling's administration Grosse Pointe Schools have grown tremendously, having nearly doubled in membership during the past four years. To take care of the rapid growth, two buildings have been erected, the Defer school and the Robert Trombly school, and construction has been started on the new high school. Marked improvement in the business administration, budget and accounting system also has been made. The high school has been developed to a four years course and recently was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. At the time of consolidation, Grosse Pointe High School consisted of only the 9th and 10th grades.

The new Superintendent, Samuel Miller Brownell, comes to Grosse Pointe from the faculty of the New York State Teachers College, Albany, New York, where he is Assistant Professor of Education. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska, College of Education, where his father is head of the Department of Secondary Education. In addition to his undergraduate work, Mr. Brownell spent three years as a graduate student at Yale University where he received the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in education. Not only is he unusually well grounded in educational work through extensive training, but he has had several years experience in school administration as principal of the State Teachers' College Training School at Peru, Nebr. He has also had experience as a teacher in secondary schools. His ability as a scholar is reflected by the fact that he is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, honorary scholastic society, as well as Phi Delta Kappa honorary educational society.

Mr. Brownell was selected from numerous applicants because of his excellent standing as a scholar and his experience in educational work which ably qualifies him for the position. His standing among his associates is illustrated in the remarks of a member of the Yale faculty who referred to Mr. Brownell as the "best all-round man the educational department has had during my association with Yale University."

CORNERSTONE LAID

Appropriate ceremonies marking the laying of the cornerstone for the Grosse Pointe High School were held before a large group of Grosse Pointe residents on Friday afternoon, April 8th.

The principal address was delivered by Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Pastor of the Central Methodist Church, Detroit, who very ably and directly discussed the far reaching community influence of the high school. "In a sense the high school is the most potent influence in the creation of the mind of the Republic," said Dr. Hough. Knowledge, discipline and creative inspiration were enumerated by him as essentials of good citizenship to be gained through high school training.

Brief talks were given by the superintendent, who spoke on the development of Grosse Pointe High School, by the architect, who reviewed part of the work of developing the building plans, and by Dr. L. E. Maire, President of the Board of Education, who gave a history of Grosse Pointe Schools. Charles A. Parcels, Secretary of the Board, supervised the laying of the cornerstone.

Raymond Massey, 10th grade, high school pupil, delivered an original oration entitled, "Don't Die on Third," which was greatly appreciated by the audience.

HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITED

The Michigan Committee of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools has placed Grosse Pointe High School on its list of accredited secondary schools, thus giving recognition to the higher standards that have been developing in Grosse Pointe schools during the past several years. As the result of this action, graduates of Grosse Pointe High School may enter any college of the North Central Association without taking entrance examinations.

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 2)

Total salaries for police officers increased from \$5,502.00 to \$7,390.50 and the total paid justices from \$192.00 to \$540.00. Of disbursements made to justices, \$95.00 is listed as "justices' services" and the balance as fees for "attending board meetings." The report indicates that a fee of \$5 is paid to each of the senior justices for attending the weekly meetings of the township board.

The salary of highway commissioner this year was reduced from \$1,777 to \$1,710, but this figure is \$460 more than was paid two years ago when then the township had more area than at present.

Amounts expended for miscellaneous services were not stated last year, but for the year just ended totaled \$546.10.

The salaries listed in last year's report totaled \$20,181.83 as compared with \$26,875.00 for salaries paid this year. Because certain minor items were not shown last year it is not possible to give a direct comparison of total salaries paid. Excluding the items not given in 1925-6 statement, salaries increased from \$20,181.83 to \$25,879.72 for the year just ended, an increase of \$5,697.89 or 28 per cent. The increase over salary items shown two years ago is \$11,180.27 or 76 per cent. This last comparison does not include election officials' fees for 1924-5 because this item was not segregated in the report that year.

Disbursements for purpose other than salaries brings to light other interesting facts. Labor for highways was paid a total of \$3,730.40. Figures in the statement indicate that labor was paid at the rate of \$5.40 a day. Remodeling of the Township Hall at the corner of Maumee Avenue and Roosevelt Place was found to cost only slightly less than \$5,000, exclusive of furnishings which cost an additional \$375.00. In the September, 1926, issue of Civic News it was reported that one of the township officers had stated that the remodeling would cost "approximately \$3,000."

Disbursements from the Poor Fund were \$10,535.61 this year, which is slightly lower than Poor Fund expenditures a year ago, but nearly \$5,000 more than two years ago.

A grant of \$10,000 was made to Grosse Pointe Park to open and pave a street adjoining the Trombley School in Windmill Pointe.

Between October 7, 1926, and March 12, 1927, \$251.55 was spent for coal for the township hall, which is seldom open except for weekly meetings of the township board. Coal was purchased from a firm which is operated, at least in part, by one of the township officials. Another example of the township board placing orders with one of its own members is found in the expenditures made for remodeling the township hall, when a board member was awarded the contract for interior painting. "Owl Club expenses" is the description of one item totaling \$9.96. Fountain pens, costing \$42.00 were purchased for township officials.

The only item in which a substantial reduction was made during the year is street and hall lighting, which was reduced from \$4,424.87 to \$2,212.50.

As stated, receipts and disbursements of the sinking fund are not considered in the figures above because of the special nature of the fund. A sinking fund is, in fact, a trust fund to which equal annual additions should be made to retire the bonds of the government at maturity. The existing law of Michigan, enacted in 1925, requires that such equal instalments be made each year and that all interest earned by such deposits be held in the fund. That the township sinking fund is not in accord with state requirements is clearly shown in the following facts: Two years ago \$10,000 was deposited in the sinking fund; last year, \$51,000; for the year ending March 31, 1927, nothing. No additional bonds have been issued during this period. Further, more than two-thirds of the interest earned by the fund during the year was not retained in the fund but was credited to the general fund from which salaries and other items of current operation are paid. Total sinking fund assets at the close of the year are given as \$80,975 and the total bonded debt given as \$148,178. Of this debt \$113,718 must be retired four years from next August; \$17,230 in 1933 and \$17,230 in 1935. While the total expenditures of the township increased by one-third, the necessary and legally required deposit to the sinking fund was completely ignored. If such practice is continued the sinking fund will not be sufficient to meet bonds falling due within a few years.

Return Postage Guaranteed.

CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
GROSSE POINTE, MICH.

1½c Paid
Detroit, Michigan
Permit No. 335

The people have a right to informative facts about governmental expenditures.