

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

Vol. 6

MAY, 1929

No. 11

TWO TRUSTEES TO BE CHOSEN AT SCHOOL ELECTION, JUNE 10th

Preparations have been completed by the Board of Education for the annual meeting on June 10th when a bond issue, a library system expenditure, the election of two trustees' annual reports and sundry other business will be submitted to the voters at the polls from 12 o'clock noon to 8 p. m. and, after the balloting, in the auditorium of the high school beginning at 8:30 p. m.

Terms expire this June of Trustees Charles A. Parcels and P. Hudson Bradley. The last day for candidates to file petitions to be placed on the ballot is May 25th. Two changes have been made in polling places. The booth in precinct No. 3, Grosse Pointe Farms, has been switched from the municipal building to the basement of the Kerby School, next door. Precinct No. 4 has been divided. Residents of Grosse Pointe Shores will continue to ballot at the municipal building of that community, which will henceforth be designated precinct No. 4. All of Lochmoor and fractional school district No. 9 of Graftiot Township has been designated precinct No. 5, with polling booth in the Mason School on Vernier Road between Charlevoix and Goethe avenues.

Precinct No. 1, Grosse Pointe Village, will register and ballot as usual at the Cadieux School, 399 St. Clair avenue; Precinct No. 2, Grosse Pointe Park, at the municipal building, 15115 Jefferson avenue.

The division of former precinct No. 4 makes it necessary for all voters in the new precincts No. 4 and No. 5 to register again whether they have previously registered or not. Registration days that year are May 18th, May 25th and June 1st, between May 18th and June 1st at the office of the Board of Education in the Grosse Pointe High School, 11 Grosse Pointe Boulevard. No one

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SCHOOL BOARD HAS ALL THE FACTS ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SITE NEEDS, BUT STILL HESITATES TO ACT

Three Experts Agree on St. Paul-Audubon Location

For the third time in the last 18 months the Board of Education was informed on Monday, April 29th, by an educational authority of its own choosing that every available fact points to the advisability of a three-junior-high-school system for Grosse Pointe.

Also for the third time, the Board was advised to locate the western junior high on a seven-acre site at St. Paul and Audubon avenues in Grosse Pointe Park.

The Board's third counsellor was Dr. George D. Strayer of Teachers' College, Columbia University, national authority in school administration matters who has studied local problems at the request of school boards in hundreds of American cities. He was employed for the task in Grosse Pointe at the recommendation of Trustee Fred Sutter, concurred in by Trustees P. Hudson Bradley, Charles A. Parcels and Charles A. Poupard, with the understanding that the time the trustees would subordinate all personal opinion and abide by the expert's recommendation. Yet, no action was taken by the Board on April 29th or at its next meeting, May 6th.

Previously, the Board had agreed upon location of three junior high school sites recommended in November, 1927, by Dr. S. M. Brownell, its own superintendent. But, bowing to the opposition of a handful of residents who placed selfish motives above public interest and who were aided and abetted by local politicians in the Park, the School Board permitted itself to be tossed from pillar to post for more than a year, selecting first one poorly-located site and then another.

During this period of painful vacillation, the Board came to its senses on one occasion and sought disinterested expert advice in the

person of Dr. Charles L. Spain, assistant superintendent of the Detroit Board of Education. Dr. Spain's study verified Dr. Brownell's, but again personal opinion and local political maneuvering defeated an unbiased decision. This led Trustee Sutter to recommend the hiring of another expert at an expense of \$3,000 to make a detailed survey and settle the vexatious problem once and for all, and above all to satisfy everyone, if possible, that the Board's action would be unbiased and in the best interests of the whole school district.

The early report presented by Dr. Strayer and Dr. N. L. Engelhardt, his colleague, was made possible through the co-operation of village, township and school officials who assisted Dr. Strayer and his university workers in a thorough collection of field facts. From the facts, conservative conclusions were drawn which resulted in the recommendation of the three-junior-high-school system. The first unit at St. Paul and Audubon will be needed as quickly as it can be built, the experts declare, saying that the first unit will be filled almost to capacity the day it is opened. Work on the second junior high school should begin shortly after the first one is completed, according to the experts, but whether the second one should be built on a site at Fairway Drive and Sunningdale in Lochmoor or on a site at Ridge and Lothrop in Grosse Pointe Farms, will be dependent on the growth in these two areas during the next few years. Both will be needed by 1940, the experts believe. They recommend that 20 acres be obtained for the site of the junior high school at Fairway Drive and Sunningdale to provide against the time when both senior and junior high school facilities will be needed there to relieve the present high school.

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 51 Warren Ave., W., Detroit
H. P. Breitenbach, Consulting Editor
B. E. Meyers, 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:

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Circulation of Civic News is 4,870

BUDGET METHODS

April is budget-making time for the Grosse Pointe municipalities. By May 1st, the budgets usually are whipped into shape, adopted and turned over to the assessors. In Lochmoor and the Shores, where expenditures are few, the making up of the budget is a simple matter. In the Farms, Village and Park, the task is more complicated. The usual budget procedure is followed. Each administrative officer and department head prepares estimates of expenditures needed by his office for the fiscal year. These estimates are submitted to the legislative body, which then correlates them with available or expected income.

Only a scientific study or analysis of a budget by competent observers will reveal its merits. Some states require that local budgets be open for public inspection for ten days and that at least one public hearing be held before adoption. This practice, while not required in Michigan, would be worthy of voluntary adoption in Grosse Pointe. When taxpayers are interested observers of budget-making, officials are apt to be more zealous in cutting down unnecessary expenditures.

Some of the principal questions the legislative bodies have to decide are: Where an important increase in expenditures over those of the present year is proposed, what are the reasons for the increase? Is it necessary? Are the salaries asked, for the various employes, in line with salaries being paid by private employers for similar positions? What price does the municipality pay for some of the principal supplies purchased? Where per capita expenditures in the community are high or low by comparison with

similar communities, what are the reasons for the difference?

Should money for improvements be raised by taxation or by going into debt? The last few years have seen a turning to pay-as-you-go methods for recurring public improvements as a means of materially reducing the cost of government. "Pay-as-you-go" means that you acquire public works for \$1 in taxes which under the debt plan costs \$1 in taxes plus fifty or sixty cents more in taxes for interest.

The United States Government has always been on a pay-as-you-go basis except for such unusual expenditures as war and the Panama Canal. Wayne County has built more than \$50,000,000 of roads on a pay-as-you-go basis of \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed valuation each year. Chicago, Boston, Lansing and Youngstown are already on a pay-as-you-go basis with respect to schools, and Cleveland schools will be on that basis in 1939.

Modern procedure facilitates balanced budgets and many direct economies, but there is still room for improvement. Financial audits insure honesty. An "operation audit" to measure the effectiveness of expenditures—detailing the unit costs of work done and services rendered—would deal with the public's right to benefit in proportion to outlay. The public also benefits when officials scrutinize proposed expenditures with care to make sure that fewer camels get their heads under the financial tent through small beginnings. The careful working out of a long-term program, say for five or ten years ahead, also makes for economy, if strictly adhered to and deviated from only after mature deliberation. A budget is essentially a plan, the economy of which may be lost if it is not lived up to.

There is no excuse for the expenditure of public money for unnecessary public services. Every dollar spent by government must yield its true return of service. All the money to do useful things must be expended, but wastes and extravagances should not be tolerated.

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who is able to register during this period can register on election day.

Voters will be asked to ballot on a \$120,000 bond issue for a proposed addition to the Trombly School. The present overcrowded unit of the

Trombly School is caring for 317 pupils in six classrooms and a kindergarten. The bond issue is for the addition of 11 classrooms, which will bring the school's capacity to approximately 900, relieving present overcrowding and anticipating estimated needs of a five-year period.

If the plan of the School Board, adopted on May 6th, to enter into a contract with the Wayne County Library Board for administration of a public and school library system is held proper after the attorney's investigation of powers, the voters will be asked to approve an item of approximately \$15,000 for library work during the coming fiscal year from July 1, 1929, to June 30, 1930.

Another item for voters' approval will be a proposal to change the maximum interest rate permissible on the \$360,000 bond issue for the Richard School (approved a year ago) from 4½ to 4¾ per cent. Plans for the Richard School are now being completed by the architects, Robert O. Derrick, Inc., and it is expected that by June 1st the School Board will be prepared to advertise for bids for its construction on a site at Kercheval avenue north of the high school athletic field. A unit ventilation system for the Richard School was decided upon by the Board on May 6th at the recommendation of both Superintendent S. M. Brownell and the architects. The latter estimated a minimum saving of \$5,000 by installation of the unit system, in addition to more satisfactory operation than that afforded by the central control system such as those in the high school and Trombly School which have been the cause of numerous complaints.

SEWER WORK

The barrel sewer in the Black Marsh Ditch through Grosse Pointe Park has been completed and is to be given a final inspection soon prior to acceptance by the village. Grading and construction to replace bridges and streets, torn up or disturbed during the sewer work is under way. Detroit has agreed to locate its pumping station north of Mack avenue, instead of at Cadieux and Harvard. Bids for sewer construction in the ditch through the Village and Farms have been received and tabulated, but final awarding of contracts is awaiting acquisition of easements needed for the work.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD?

(In the last three issues of Civic News appeared the first articles in this series. They raised the question: Why cannot the intelligent group of public servants on the Board of Education conduct its affairs in a business-like manner, in a reasonable length of time and without undue burden to its own peace of mind and that of the taxpayers? The answer given was that the Board is hampering itself by clinging to antiquated business methods inherited from previous boards; is permitting local politics to color its decisions; and is disregarding expert counsel to follow personal opinion unsupported by facts. This and a subsequent article will survey specific cases and suggest remedies in a constructive program.)

POLITICAL wire-pulling has been practiced during the last two years and a half to keep a proposed junior high school from being located in an approximately central geographical location to serve the children of the populous western end of the Grosse Pointe school district.

The maneuvering of local public officials and school trustees at the behest of a small but determined group of residents from the area adjacent to the proposed school site in Grosse Pointe Park has succeeded for seventeen months in defeating every effort of public-spirited officials and disinterested experts to settle the controversy on the basis of fact rather than personal prejudice.

The actions of the Board of Education during this time naturally were anything but dignified and far from creditable to the intelligent and estimable group of school trustees pledged to disinterested and business-like handling of educational affairs.

A chronological summary of the junior high school case:

1. **November, 1927**—Board of Education decides on a three-junior-high-school program, voting to secure sites in the approximate locations recommended by its superintendent, Dr. S. M. Brownell:

- a. Three-Mile Drive and St. Paul avenue. (Park.)
- b. Ridge Road and Lothrop avenue. (Farms.)
- c. Fairway Drive near Lochmoor Blvd. (Lochmoor.)

2. **March 15, 1928**—Public hearing held on sites chosen by Board of Education, namely: St. Paul and Audubon; Lothrop and Charlevoix; Fairway Drive near Lochmoor Blvd.

3. **March 29, 1928**—Second public hearing held at which Park officials

and a small group of property owners registered a strong protest against St. Paul-Audubon site, suggesting instead a site at Cadieux and Kercheval in the next village.

4. **April 6, 1928**—Village Commission of Grosse Pointe Park adopts a resolution opposing location of junior high school in its community and approving a site three-quarters of a mile east, just across the boundary of the Park and in Grosse Pointe Village. The Commission then conducted a post-card "straw vote," replies to which registered opposition to any more schools in the Park and favored a junior high school site in the next village. (If each village insisted that all future schools should be just across the boundary in the adjoining village, it would be impossible to build any more schools, but this absurdity was calmly ignored.)

5. **September, 1928**—Board orders surveys for a two-junior-high-school system with one site adjacent to the present high school and another near the Detroit University School on Cook Road.

6. **October, 1928**—Board votes to locate western unit of two-junior-high-school system at Cadieux and Kercheval, instead of adjoining the present high school.

7. **November, 1928**—Public hearing develops opposition to two-school system for which Board has no authority or recommendation, except its own personal wishes. Hiring of outside expert approved to obtain disinterested counsel.

8. **December, 1928**—Motion to hire outside authority reconsidered at request of Trustee Julius L. Berns, supported by Trustee Fred Sutter and Trustee P. Hudson Bradley, and opposed by Trustees Charles A. Parcels and Charles A. Poupard. Nevertheless it was agreed to ask Dr. Charles L. Spain, assistant superintendent of Detroit Board of Education, to confer with the local Board on its problem.

9. **January, 1929**—Dr. Spain's report received, recommending St. Paul-Audubon site for immediate acquisition. The Kercheval-Cadieux site, according to Dr. Spain, is three-quarters of a mile east of the best and most central location for the western junior high school district.

10. **January 28, 1929**—Board votes to reconsider designation of Kercheval-Cadieux site, but side-steps Dr. Spain's recommendation by designating a site adjoining the high school, reverting to its action of September, 1928.

11. **February 4, 1929**—Board votes to reconsider designation of site adjoining high school grounds on Kercheval and authorizes Trustee Sutter to seek another outside authority to advise the Board.

12. **February 14, 1929**—Trustee Sutter recommends employment of Mrs. Strayer and Engelhardt of Columbia University, nationally known authorities, at estimated cost of \$3,000. Recommendation concurred in.

13. **April 29, 1929**—Dr. Strayer presents report on his detailed survey with maps and data on every angle, and recommends a three-junior-high-school system as follows:

- a. St. Paul and Audubon, 7-acre minimum.
- b. Ridge and Lothrop, 10-acre minimum.
- c. Fairway Drive near Sunningdale, 20 acres, for anticipated junior and senior high school.

The Board took no action.

The junior high school case became a "case" (1) because local interests brazenly put their interests above those of the whole school district and (2) because school trustees rejected expert advice to follow personal opinion.

The proposed remedies for the Board's ailments, to be discussed at length in a later article, are briefly: (1) Business-like conduct of affairs in short sessions open to the public and devoted to fundamental policies, assignment of duties and supervisory action; (2) School Board candidates who have no entangling alliances and who will shed their local attitudes when they get on the Board and represent the whole district; (3) Reliance by the Board on disinterested expert judgment rather than biased, personal opinion unsupported by facts.

The Grosse Pointe Yacht Club, believed to be one of the finest structures of its kind in the world, is nearing completion at the foot of Vernier Road in Grosse Pointe Shores and is expected to be ready for official opening about the middle of June, officials of the club have announced. The clubhouse is located on a strip of land that juts out into Lake St. Clair adjacent to the municipal lake-front park.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

A uniform speed limit of 25 miles an hour in residence districts and 20 miles in business districts obtains in four of the five Grosse Pointe villages. In Grosse Pointe Village, the residence speed limit is 20 miles, the business district limit 15 miles per hour.

"Stop" streets, too, are now uniform. In Grosse Pointe Park, the stop streets are Jefferson, Kercheval, Charlevoix and Mack Avenues from village limits to village limits and Maumee Avenue from the west side of Kensington Road to the easterly village limits. In Grosse Pointe Village, the stop streets are Jefferson, Maumee, Charlevoix, Kercheval and Mack. The Farms' stop streets are Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Boulevard, Ridge Road, Mack Avenue, Moross Road and Fisher Road. The Lake Shore Road in the Shores and Mack Avenue in Lochmoor are the only stop streets in those two villages.

Mack Avenue through Lochmoor, which might be expected to invite "scorching," carries a well-conducted stream of traffic, according to the police.

SHORES' ELECTION

Messrs. Oscar Webber and Charles F. Becker are candidates for trusteeships at Grosse Pointe Shores' annual election, May 21st, to succeed Trustees Hobart B. Hoyt and John T. Hurley, who are not seeking re-election. Trustee Ford Balantyne is a candidate to succeed himself, as are President Fred A. Behr and Clerk William C. Roney.

STEVENS T. MASON SCHOOL

The Stevens T. Mason School on Vernier Road between Charlevoix and Goethe Avenues, Grosse Pointe's sixth elementary school, was dedicated on Friday, May 10th. It is Georgian Colonial in its architectural design, is built of brick with Indiana limestone trim. It is a two-story structure, of fireproof construction throughout, and comprises the first unit of a building which will ultimately house fifteen hundred pupils.

In this first unit are included six class rooms, a kindergarten, library, combined auditorium-gymnasium, administrative offices, clinic, lunch room, teachers' rest room, locker and shower rooms for boys and girls, and playroom, in addition to the heating plant and toilets. The working capacity for the present unit is approximately 325.

SCHOOL BOARD DECIDES NOT TO ENCOURAGE PLAY

A recreation schedule of passive supervision of playground and athletic fields owned by the Board of Education was adopted by the board on May 6th for control of activities by children and adults this summer at the high school athletic field, and at the Defer, Trombly and Mason school grounds. Use of the grounds is not to be encouraged in any way, the board decided at the insistence of Trustee Julius L. Berns, supervisors being instructed merely to maintain order and provide apparatus and permits for those who patronize the fields.

Inter-playground tournaments, contests and general promotion of

healthful and spirited avenues of release for youthful and adult energies including track meets, pet shows, hiking, swimming and picnic excursions as recommended by local and national recreation authorities are all to be frowned on unless public demand proves irresistible.

The recreation problem in Grosse Pointe differs from that in the congested districts of Detroit, Trustee Berns maintained, objecting to what he termed "playing nurse" to children of parents who prefer to be away enjoying themselves instead of keeping their offspring interested in their own back-yard sports.

"If we go into this recreation business even on a small scale," said Mr. Berns, "it's bound to grow and I, for one, don't want to take the responsibility for what the school board might be getting into."

FARMS' COUNCIL HEEDS BETTER WATER DEMAND

Spurred by numerous complaints of residents on the condition of the water supply in Grosse Pointe Farms, the village council in April took action to study ways and means of providing better water. Three angles are being given consideration: (1) The plan proposed by the health officer of the Grosse Pointe district for several of the villages to co-operate in construction of an adequate filtration plant, intake and pumping station to supply all the Grosse Pointes; (2) An individual filtration plant for the present supply; (3) Purchase of water from Detroit. Reports are expected to be ready for study and decision at the next council meeting, May 20th.

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Citizens Association

OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

51 West Warren Ave.

Detroit, Mich.

The main cause of human errors is passion. Self-love, prejudice and innumerable likes and dislikes prevent us from seeing even facts as they are, or inferring from them their natural conclusions. The remedy is an honest wish to produce unadulterated thought.

—Ernest Dimmet.

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