

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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No. 4

FIRST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TO BE NEEDED IN 1931, SUPERINTENDENT ADVISES BOARD OF EDUCATION

Schedule of Work on Four Construction Projects Is Outlined to Keep Pace With Rapid Growth in District

The building program necessary for the next two years to keep pace with the rapidly growing public school enrollment in Grosse Pointe was submitted to the Board of Education on October 7th by Dr. S. M. Brownell, superintendent, together with a proposed procedure schedule designed to accomplish completion of four major projects with utmost expedition consistent with careful planning and execution between now and September, 1931.

The projects are the first unit of the Gabriel Richard School, the addition to the Trombly School, the first unit of a new elementary school on the Cadieux-Kercheval site, and the first unit of junior high school No. 1 on the St. Paul-Audubon site. The superintendent predicts that the senior high school will be over-crowded the school year 1930-31 with a combined junior-senior enrollment of 1,420. Enrollment now is 1,132. It is planned to alleviate the anticipated overcrowding by temporary use of space in the Richard School for some seventh grade classes.

To avoid mistakes of the past which have resulted in dissatisfaction of one kind or another after plans had proceeded to a point involving considerable sums to effect economies or changes deemed necessary, the Board of Education has taken two important steps:

1. A new form or architectural contract has been drawn up by the Board's attorney.
2. A revised schedule of major planning in connection with building projects has been adopted tentatively, providing that all facts relative to construction shall be available before a bond issue is submitted. This involves selection of an architect and completion of

plans and specifications prior to obtaining a cost estimate and submitting a bond proposal to popular vote. The attorney has been asked for an opinion on the legality of incurring preliminary expenses of this nature in advance of approval of a bond issue. His informal opinion October 8th was that the Board could legally incur such expense and even construct a school building, spreading the cost on the tax roll in case the voters defeated the bond proposal. The local school board, he pointed out, is an agent of the state department of public instruction, and as such is required to make adequate provision for the proper education of the children of school age in the district whether the money necessary therefore is borrowed and repaid out of taxes over a period of years or whether it is collected at once and paid in cash; the only

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BULLETIN

The Board of Education at a special meeting October 28th authorized its officers to negotiate with the owners of the properties designated for junior high school sites for long term options, preliminary to determining the amount of bond issues which will be submitted for approval of voters prior to purchasing or, if necessary, condemning. This procedure was decided upon following receipt of an opinion of the attorney-general that money for purchase of school sites must be available before the Board can incur an obligation for such purchase.

VILLAGE TO VOTE NOV. 11th ON \$300,000 BOND ISSUE

Approval of a \$300,000 bond issue to complete the work now under way in connection with the closing of the Black Marsh Ditch in Grosse Pointe Village, including the erection of a pumping station and an interceptor to settle permanently the storm water and sewage disposal problem of the village and to permit abandonment of the present sewage disposal plant north of Mack Avenue, will be asked by the village officials at a special election called for November 11th. Registrations of qualified electors not now on the books will be received at the village hall on November 9th or may be sworn in at the polls in the town hall on Maumee Avenue on election day.

This issue is an addition to the \$360,000 bond proposal approved last winter for financing an enclosed sewer in the ditch. Floods encountered last spring led the council to decide on immediate carrying-out of the portion of the ditch project which had previously been scheduled tentatively for about five years from now. Contracts let to date plus engineering, inspection and contingent expenses and anticipated repaving, sidewalk and back-fill costs as compiled by the village engineer indicate the project will cost complete approximately \$640,000.

The pumping station to be erected at Neff and Charlevoix will have a capacity of 90,000 gallons per minute to be divided among six units: one of 40,000 capacity, two of 20,000 each, two of 4,000 each and one of 2,000 gallons capacity. Contracts let for the construction and equipment total \$132,121.

In Grosse Pointe Farms work is also under way on the ditch elimination and sewage disposal project, including a pumping station with a capacity of 130,000 gallons per minute. The project will be completed at a cost of approximately \$414,000, it is now estimated, with all contracts let. A bond issue of \$612,000 was approved by the voters last March.

Grosse Pointe Civic News
Grosse Pointe, Mich.

P. O. Address, 51 Warren Ave., W., Detroit
B. E. Meyers, Editor

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FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

The Board of Education learned that the Kerby School requires immediate attention to prevent its being closed by the state fire marshal. Fire escapes on the new addition from the assembly room on the second floor to the ground, outside exits for all basement rooms used as assembly places, and insulated ventilators were some of the deficiencies cited in a letter received by the Board.

Fire prevention week was the occasion for drills and circulation of questionnaires among school children containing pointers on what to do and what not to do to prevent fires in the home. In Grosse Pointe Park the fire department gave special demonstrations at all the schools, a feature of which was net-jumping by the firemen and an illustration of the use of the "Bowline-on-the-Bight" knot by which conscious or unconscious persons can be quickly and safely lowered from burning buildings at the rate of ten a minute.

Questionnaire returns revealed that many homes were unaware that the quickest way to get the fire department on the telephone and avoid calling the wrong number is to ask for the department by name; also that many are not aware that it is best and most expeditious to send in an alarm from the nearest firebox and direct the apparatus to the fire than to risk delay by incomplete directions over the telephone.

Fire officials and citizens rightfully complain that much delay is occasioned in responding to fire calls when wrong departments are called or fires occur on boundary lines. This points clearly to the oft-mentioned necessity for closer relations of all kinds between the various village fire departments, with perhaps some central administration to increase efficiency and economy.

Fires in the Cadieux-Mack area that would be a short run for the Village department, for instance, mean a trip

Public Indifference to Fire Precaution Revealed

Many and various are the criticisms heaped upon public officials' heads from time to time by irate taxpayers. This story is different.

Fire prevention week was celebrated in Grosse Pointe during October. The various village departments took the occasion to circularize every home with a list of "Dwelling House Hazards" which, it was suggested, the home owner should tear off and keep in a prominent place for reference on what to do and what not to do. This list was attached to a questionnaire given school pupils to take home, fill out and return.

The first groups of questionnaires that came back to the fire departments were carefully filled out, but in every case the list of pointers that was to be kept in the home was returned with the questionnaire.

by the Park apparatus across the entire village from the west limits to the east.

LIBRARY NOW OPEN DAILY IN GROSSE POINTE PARK

More than 400 residents of Grosse Pointe Park attended the opening October 17th of the new branch of the Grosse Pointe Public Library in the basement of the municipal building, 15115 Jefferson Avenue. The visitors found a surprising change from former limited collections and facilities to spacious rooms with comfortable tables and chairs, well-lined shelves and cataloging and office space. The staff, recruited under arrangements of the Board of Education with the Wayne County Library, has been busy since September 1st cataloging 5,000

Wayne County and 1,000 Grosse Pointe books in preparation for the branch opening, according to Miss Florence Severs, librarian. Formerly open only on Tuesdays and Fridays, the new branch is now open daily from 12 to 9 p. m.

The branch in Grosse Pointe Village, next to the Neighborhood Club on Waterloo Avenue, is open daily from 1 to 9 p. m.; the sub-station in Grosse Pointe Shores' municipal building from 1 to 9 p. m. on Wednesdays; the sub-station in the Goodrich Confectionery on Mack Avenue in Lochmoor, all day, and as long as the store is open in the evening.

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choice for the voters being whether they choose to "charge it" or pay cash.

An architectural contract drawn up by the attorney for submission to Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, recently designated architects for the addition to the Trombly School, is expected when finally revised and approved to become a model for future use. It requires the architect to prepare plans and specifications for a building of a specific size to cost not more than a certain definite sum. If the architect has reason to believe after plans are finally approved and before bids are taken that conditions have arisen which may result in increased cost, it is his duty to inform the Board thereof, the contract provides, and any changes that may be found necessary to keep the building within an appropriation must be made at the architect's expense unless unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances have been encountered and noted in advance.

Following is the tentative schedule indicating dates at which different portions of the work of the next two years must be completed:

	Richard Building First Unit	Trombly Addition	Cadieux-Kercheval Building First Unit	Junior High School No. 1 First Unit
1. Curriculum planned...	Completed	Completed	Completed	Jan. 1, '30
2. Population survey....	Completed	Nov. 1, '29	Dec. 1, '29	Jan. 1, '30
3. Architect selected....	Completed	Completed		
4. Educational layout....	Completed	Nov. 15, '29	Dec. 15, '29	Jan. 15, '30
5. Architect preliminary sketches	Completed	Dec. 1, '29	Jan. 15, '30	Feb. 15, '30
6. Equipment layout.....	Completed	Dec. 8, '29	Feb. 1, '30	Feb. 22, '30
7. Completed plans and specifications	Oct. 15, '29	Feb. 1, '30	Apr. 15, '30	May 1, '30
8. Cost estimated.....	Oct. 15, '29	Feb. 1, '30	May 5, '30	May 5, '30
9. Bond issue submitted..	Oct. 15, '29	Feb. 1, '30	June 9, '30	June 9, '30
10. Bids taken on building	Nov. 4, '29	Mar. 1, '30	July 15, '30	July 15, '30
11. Work started.....	Nov. 10, '29	Apr. 1, '29	Aug. 1, '30	Aug. 1, '30
12. Completed equipment specifications	May 1, '30	May 1, '30	May 1, '31	May 1, '31
13. Bids taken on equipment	May 15, '30	May 15, '30	May 15, '31	May 15, '31
14. Building completed....	Aug. 15, '30	Aug. 15, '30	Aug. 15, '31	Aug. 15, '31

PROCEDURE METHODS OF THE TOWNSHIP OFFICERS

No. 2—Tax Collection

The tax collector of the township is the treasurer, who is able to start this collection on December 10th, when, by law, the tax roll is delivered to him by the supervisor, and at which date the levy immediately becomes a lien on all property taxed. During the month from December 10th to January 10th, the tax can be collected without penalty, but from the latter date until March 1st a penalty of three per cent of the total tax is added. After March 1st a report is made to the County Treasurer of all delinquent taxes, and payments are made to him, with an added penalty of three-quarters of one per cent, but as the rolls are not turned over to the county treasurer until May 1st, payments are received by the township treasurer up to that time.

In practice, the treasurer and the supervisor work in harmony so that the tax bills are prepared and the township, school and health taxes are shown on them prior to December 10th. Upon the final check of the tax roll, the supervisor delivers it to the treasurer, often before December 10th. The treasurer completes the tax bills and forwards them to the taxpayers, who receives bills about December 25th.

A provision of the law requires that all taxes be reported separately, which makes an exceptional amount of useless work. This is not peculiar to the township, but to all tax-collecting agencies. Efforts by Wayne County to change the law by a lump sum payment to the state have met with much opposition but no doubt, in the course of time, the law will be changed. It is now necessary to list all the taxes collected for the day under the separate headings, which means in Grosse Pointe leafing over the bills seven times, and in case of error, checking back to locate the mistake.

Record Keeping

According to statute, the tax roll and assessment roll should show the name of the taxpayer, but in Grosse Pointe, this is done only in a small number of cases, for those whose long ownership of property makes any change improbable. The reason given for not adhering to the law is that property changes hands often at the present time, so that the records would never be cor-

rect. Work on the rolls is greatly reduced by ignoring the law.

At present, it is only from the previous year's tax bills that it is possible to secure the names and addresses of the taxpayers for pre-billing. In case of enmity between the incoming treasurer and outgoing treasurer, a political possibility, it might be impossible to secure the tax bills for pre-billing, which would result in a condition which would be far from the best interests of the community. This gives added importance to showing the names and addresses on the tax rolls.

Tax bills are corrected from year to year, in the same manner as in Detroit and other cities,—and that is, the old taxpayer is billed until some complaint is made, when the records are corrected. This method is the cheapest and reasonably efficient, for the township is always protected in collecting the tax by the law allowing the sale of the property for unpaid taxes. These tax sales are conducted by the county treasurer after authority is received from the auditor-general in Lansing.

Salaries

At the end of the tax-collecting period, March 1st, a list of delinquent taxes is drawn off the tax rolls on forms furnished by the state, and forwarded to the county treasurer who becomes the collecting officer for delinquent taxes. A return is made also of the personal unpaid taxes, which under the Michigan law must be collected in full by the township, the state only assuming responsibility for real property. After receipt by the county treasurer, the unpaid personal tax is audited and returned to the township treasurer for another effort to collect, for which he is allowed 4 per cent collection fee and penalty. To enforce collection, authority is given the treasurer to attach and sell any personal property to satisfy the tax, but this is seldom done. Any personal tax found impossible of collection is re-assessed at large on all taxpayers, the following year.

Salaries for the collection of the tax total \$5,300, of which the treasurer estimates \$3,000 as his personal salary, and the balance for clerical assistance. Much of this assistance is in preparing the bills for mailing. The supervisor's clerk, on account of his familiarity with the tax rolls, is customarily re-

tained by the treasurer at a salary of \$75 per week, or \$975 for the tax-collecting period.

The salary of the treasurer appears rather high in contrast to other salaries paid the township officers, as he claims about six months are required for his work in the township. There is an historical reason for this, however. Up to 1922, the treasurer was paid by a one per cent collection fee provided by law. However, it was found that the tax levy was attaining such proportions in some townships that the resulting compensation was out of proportion to the work required of the treasurer. In 1915 the law was amended so that after an approving referendum vote, the treasurer could be placed on a salary in lieu of fees, which was to be set by the Township Board. The wisdom of this is seen in the tax levy of Grosse Pointe which under the one per cent system would pay the treasurer more than \$10,000 for his efforts. In 1922, approval of the voters was secured to place the treasurer on a salary which was set at \$4,000, or a reduction for that year of \$1,500 under the fee system. It was hard to get away from the custom of making the treasurer's office highly remunerative, so gradually the total salaries for collection were increased to \$5,300, with, of course, an increase in the amount of work necessary to collect the tax as the area developed.

The collection fee of one per cent was mandatory until changed at the last session of the legislature. When not paid to the treasurer due to a salary, it was formerly placed in the contingent fund, against which expenses of collection were drawn together with a portion of the salary of the supervisor's clerk. This one per cent collection fee, of course, will no longer be added to tax bills.

COUNTY ASKED TO LOCATE PARK OUT MACK AVENUE

A resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Wayne County on motion of Edmund C. Vernier, supervisor of Grosse Pointe Township, has instructed the Wayne County Park Trustees to make a survey of the eastern part of the county with particular reference to the Mack Avenue area and to select tentatively such sites as may be, in the judgment of the trustees, adapted for use as county parks and to report upon findings at the next September session of the Board of Supervisors.

COMMUNITY FUND CAMPAIGN

The twelfth annual campaign of the Detroit Community Fund, in which many Grosse Pointe residents are interested as both workers and subscribers, extends this year from October 28th to November 4th. Last year the fund fell \$100,000 short of its \$3,500,000 goal, causing untold hardship, according to Tracy W. McGregor, President.

This year the goal is \$3,650,000. The fund has today nearly 300,000 individual givers whose support last year financed help to 59,000 families cared for by the agencies which co-operate in the community chest campaign to decrease overlap and waste among charitable institutions. The number of agencies have increased from 42 to 80 since the fund was organized while the cost of operation has been reduced from 15 to 5 per cent, according to William J. Norton, executive secretary.

The awakening of public interest and support to the obligations of the stronger members of the community to the weaker, through community fund campaigns, has been described by President Hoover as "a practical application of the Golden Rule," and "the most inspiring development in American life today."

SHORES' NOTES

The fill in the lake-front park in Grosse Pointe Shores will be completed in another month, Supt. A. H. Bennett reports. A 10-foot widening of Vernier Road in the village has just been completed while work is progressing steadily on the fill for the construction

of the 120-foot Lake Shore Drive by the Wayne County Road Commission. Since connecting the village water mains with Detroit water at the Lochmoor boundary line in Vernier Road a month ago, Shores' residents report enjoying good pressure and a supply of clear, drinkable water. (Note—Grosse Pointe Farms is now the only village in the township not receiving water from Detroit. Highland Park has expressed a willingness to relieve Grosse Pointe Farms of its contract to buy unfiltered water if the Farms will pay \$200 a month for the five years the contract still has to run. Complaints recently have been growing in volume and quantity, demanding that officials speed action to obtain Detroit water supply.)

RICHARD SCHOOL BIDS TO BE OPENED NOV. 4th

Revised plans and specifications for a 480-pupil first unit of the Gabriel Richard School, expected to cost approximately \$325,000, were approved at a special meeting of the Board of Education in October. Bids are to be received and opened November 4th, and the building is scheduled for completion August 15, 1930. It will contain ten classrooms, a music room, art room, library, playroom, kindergarten, clinic, teachers' restroom, office and a combined auditorium and gymnasium. The site, 3.55 acres in area, is bounded by McKinley, McMillan, Ridge and Kercheval in Grosse Pointe Farms. It was acquired by direct negotiation with the property owners, saving the district the expense and delay of a condemnation procedure.

ART EXHIBITION

A second exhibition of work by artists and art students of Grosse Pointe Township is scheduled to open at the Neighborhood Club, 17145 Waterloo Avenue, on November 16th, it was announced in October by John Vogt, 1304 Grayton Road. Paintings, etchings and metalwork exhibited last spring caused much favorable comment.

BOARD CONSIDERS HIRING A SCHOOL ARCHITECT

In view of the fact that the Board of Education anticipates a four-million-dollar construction program for new schools to keep pace with Grosse Pointe's growth during the next ten years, President Fred Sutter has suggested that the Board study the advisability of hiring a trained school architect as full-time counselor and supervisor.

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Civic News welcomes letters from residents of Grosse Pointe Township on any matter of public concern and will be glad to devote as much space as possible to publication of such communications when signed by the writers.

The new "Niagara" station of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company at Mack Avenue and Cadieux Road, designed to provide a dial headquarters for the Grosse Pointe district, is expected to go into service sometime in December, it was announced this month by the telephone company.

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Citizens Association

OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

51 West Warren Ave.
Detroit, Mich.

"That civilization which makes the fullest possible use of human ingenuity and intelligence in search of truth . . . to reform social and political institutions for the benefit of the greatest number is highly idealistic and spiritual. It will continue to grow and improve itself."

—Hu Shih.

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