

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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No. 8

SCHOOL BOARD INSURANCE

A substantial credit—\$13,246.41—obtained on insurance by a reclassification of various school board buildings was given to the Board of Education by its agents in July, 1929, but has not been paid to date, it was revealed on Feb. 3rd, when the agents appeared before the board in response to a request for an explanation of the delay.

The explanation was received in executive session, prior to which the agents stated that they were now prepared to pay back a portion of the credit and to promise the remainder in the future. What took place at the secret session has not been revealed officially. However, the stormy nature of the meeting frequently broadcast the voices of the participants far beyond the confines of the closed doors, and left no doubt that some of the trustees were not satisfied with the agents' explanation of why the credit was not paid promptly.

If the agents credited the school board in July, it is natural to infer that the credit appeared on their books and in their reports to their companies so that they themselves should have received credit for the refund at once and should naturally have paid the school district the acknowledged debt without delay. In permitting this debt to continue delinquent, the school district is placed in the position of a banker supplying the insurance agents with capital to run their businesses.

The board's insurance "counselor," appointed in May, 1928, upon the recommendation of Trustees Julius L. Berns and Charles A. Poupard, is the Henk-Garska Company, a local agency in Grosse Pointe Park, whose principals are Alfred J. Garska, village president, and Fintan L. Henk, ex-councilman of the village. Under the Berns-Poupard plan, the "counselor" agreed to split its commission with five other agencies. Two of the latter objected to this method of hand-

ling the business and declined to participate, warning the board that under certain conditions this "split-commission" method might develop into a serious one for the school district. Those who did consent to participate were Clement B. Poupard, George A. Mahlmeister and Capitol Underwriters Insurance Agency, of which Charles W. Dupont is manager.

A suggestion that the board might profitably employ an insurance counselor of widely-acknowledged ability to advise it on insurance matters, in the same fashion as many of Detroit's large business and industrial enterprises do, was made to the board by President Fred Sutter, who estimated that the cost of this service would amount to less than \$400 annually.

SKATING RINK PROVES VALUE OF CO-OPERATION

A concrete example of how a satisfactory arrangement may be worked out between municipal bodies and a competent recreation commission, such as was recommended a year ago for the Grosse Pointe district by C. E. Brewer, commissioner of recreation in Detroit, is to be found in the experience this winter of co-operation between the Neighborhood Club and the council of Grosse Pointe Village.

Recognizing the desirability of providing a rink for outdoor sport, the village council considered creating one on Lake St. Clair at the municipal park. This lake front project, being found impractical, was abandoned in favor of co-operation with the Neighborhood Club in development of a rink on the club grounds at Waterloo and Neff. An average of 300 a day have enjoyed skating on this huge ice rink, 150x150, which boasts the best ice in the metropolitan area, including Belle Isle, according to George Elworthy, director of the Neighborhood Club.

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TOWNSHIP PRIMARY

Nominees of the Democratic ticket at the township primary customarily are assured of election in April. Candidates who have filed to run at this year's primary, March 3rd, for Democratic nominations, include:

For supervisor, salary \$3,500, Edmund C. Vernier, incumbent, and Charles A. Paye, retiring treasurer. For clerk, fees of approximately \$1,700, Daniel G. Allor, incumbent, and Albert E. LaBelle. For treasurer, salary \$4,000, Clyde C. Burgess, Milton Renaud, A. F. C. Vernier, Stephen H. Van Tiem, Frank M. Allard, James M. Rasmussen.

For justice of the peace, four-year term, Walter Schweikart, incumbent. For member board of review, Jerry Vanderbusch. For constable, four nominations, Andrew T. Phillips, Louis Wisser, Ommet Pentecost, Bert Forton, Alex W. Elfers, Frank W. Defer, Roy Wallwork.

Two candidates have filed for the Republican nomination for treasurer, Joseph H. Primeau and Edward Van Assche. One of these two will oppose the Democratic nominee for treasurer at the township election on April 7th.

(Note—Attention of voters and officials is respectfully called to another part of this issue of Civic News where will be found recommendations for changes in township organization prompted by a non-partisan study of the township government. This and a subsequent article, which will appear in the next issue of Civic News, with specific recommendations for changes in procedure to attain greater efficiency, are designed to be helpful to whomever is elected if it is deemed advisable in the public interest to make what changes are legally possible in present admittedly antique organization and procedure.)

DETROIT WATER SUPPLY

Grosse Pointe Farms was connected with the Detroit metropolitan water supply system February 15th. All five villages in the township are now enjoying filtered water and good pressure from Detroit.

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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

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AN ELECTION THOUGHT

Whoever is chosen for village and township offices in March will have to cope this year with at least one problem that was not present heretofore: a decrease in assessable personal property due to the large number of mergers of Detroit banks and trust companies which last year converted bank stocks into non-taxable holding company securities. Last year, the total township assessment increased only three million dollars compared with an average of nine million for the previous five years. This year, with a prospect of an estimated \$15,000,000 reduction in personal property in the township, all tax-spending bodies must trim sail or greatly increase the amount of taxes collected.

The preparation of this year's budget estimates ought to challenge the most painstaking attention of both citizens and officials. Economy starts with the budget and should, but not always does, continue through the year. The budget and the assessed valuation of taxable property determine the tax rate.

Debt Third of Tax Bill

During the present year the total bill for community services in Grosse Pointe is approximately \$2,500,000. Of this amount, \$700,000 or a little less than a third, was required for debt charges to service \$10,294,340.19 indebtedness, a per capita of \$487.42.

Another million and a half in bonded debt has been added in the meantime or is about to be added by sale of authorized but unissued bonds. Debt service charges, thus, will be greater the coming year than they were last. Only a reduction or elimination of specific items in the net operating budget estimates can produce a lower tax rate or prevent the present rate from increasing.

Without the usual increased assessment to aid them, officials have no alternative, if they would be truly economical, but to cut operating budgets.

Officials' Responsibility

What is reasonable and practicable for Grosse Pointe is for the duly elected officials to determine. Theirs is the obligation to ascertain (1) Whether any employe is overpaid by comparison with similar service in other municipalities or departments; (2) Whether economies may be effected by combining duties or consolidating positions; (3) Whether every employe is carrying a full load of necessary work; (4) Whether any duty or service now being performed may safely and properly be discontinued; (5) Whether any practice or method of work should be abandoned in favor of one that is likely to be more economical and equally effectual or more effectual at the same cost.

"It is erroneous," says City Manager Edy of Berkeley, California, "to assume that the only way to meet a legitimate requirement for new and extended service is by employing additional people and buying equipment. This means should be resorted to only after exhausting the possibilities of improved methods, ingenious devices and an unprejudiced appraisal of the value of every present employe. That is the practice of successful private business, and it must be the practice of a public service that would be successful in every respect."

POLICE RADIO PLAN WINS TOWNSHIP APPROVAL

The township board on January 22nd adopted a committee report on plans for a central police radio station to be under the supervision of the police chiefs of the five villages and to be financed by a \$12,000 tax to be levied on the township-at-large. Township officials believe that accumulations of balances in various funds—amounting to an estimated \$10,000 or \$15,000—will permit financing of the project the present fiscal year without resorting to a loan.

Legal details of the financing have not been worked out, the understanding at present, however, being that the radio item may be carried under a "public safety" division of the Board of Health.

In adopting the committee report, the township board, on motion of Justice Walter Schweikart, amended the report to provide that James C. Drysdale, chief of the Grosse Pointe Park police department, be chairman of the board of police chiefs for one year. An amendment by Justice Arthur Vernier provides that the radio operators be hired by the police chiefs' board subject to approval of the township board. The committee in its report provided for appointment of William A. Neff, superintendent of the signal and disposal department in Grosse Pointe Village, to purchase necessary parts for a radio transmitter and sets required by the scout cars and to assemble the transmitter and install the sets.

Station In Village

The report adopted by the township board provides for housing the radio operators and the transmitting apparatus, which will constitute the radio station, on the upper floor of Roosevelt Place building which is owned by the township but which is being used by the Village of Grosse Pointe under a 99-year lease.

The radio committee meeting January 20, called by Supervisor Edmund C. Vernier, consisted of representatives of the five villages, including: President Alfred J. Garska, Commissioner William P. Shoemaker and Chief James C. Drysdale of Grosse Pointe Park; President Kenneth L. Moore, Trustee James Rasmussen and Chief Albert Fluitt of Grosse Pointe Farms; Trustee Leo O. Teetaert and Clerk Norbert P. Neff of Grosse Pointe Village; President Fred A. Behr, Superintendent A. H. Bennett and Chief O. C. Ingalsbe of Grosse Pointe Shores; President E. C. Vernier, Trustees Edward Vanderbush and Arthur H. Post and Chief William J. Mason of Lochmoor. Mr. Vernier was named chairman of the meeting and he appointed Norbert Neff secretary.

A telephone hook-up, the committee decided, was an important part of the radio broadcasting plan, since an essential of success is speed in receiving complaints as well as transmitting them. So it was recommended that the township finance connection of Lochmoor and Grosse Pointe Shores police departments with the Farms-Village-Park hook-up. A suggestion was made

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PROPOSALS FOR RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

No. 1—Salary Standardization and Changes In Present Organization

STUDY of the township government has revealed that salaries do not conform to any standard and that no permanent office force is recruited to assist during the period of great activity. Realignment of the work of the township, it appears, might result in a better service and more efficient expenditure of township funds.

Salaries of the various officials have grown up in a singular way so that some inequalities are apparent. The treasurer is the outstanding example, where the history of the office has caused it to be the most remunerative in the township, although the duties are not exacting and call for less effort than the office of supervisor.

Salary changes proposed for each position are as follows:

	Present	Proposed
SUPERVISOR	\$ 3,500*	\$ 3,500
Supervisor's Clerk.....	2,500	2,500
Supervisor's Typist No. 1..	none	1,500
Supervisor's Typist No. 2..	none	300
TREASURER	4,000	2,000
Treasurer's Clerks.....	1,300	none
CLERK	1,700	1,000
Total.....	\$13,000	\$10,800

*Includes \$1,000 auto maintenance but does not include \$1,000 voted in July, 1929, when township board took over duties of former consolidated health board.

Supervisor—This position is considered as the standard by which the others are evaluated. The salary proposed seems adequate, as there is no dearth of candidates willing to stand for election. The salary is for full-time performance.

Supervisor's Clerk—The salary proposed contemplates the position being filled by a man who is able to act in the supervisor's stead. While ostensibly there is no change in salary, there is actually a reduction of \$1,000 paid him by the treasurer for assisting in collection of taxes. The salary is for full-time performance.

Supervisor's Typist No. 1—This is a new position, with duties as outlined later. It is proposed that the assessment rolls be typed. The salary is for full-time performance. Typist No. 2 is for temporary help during the billing and collecting period. It covers two to three months' work.

Treasurer—The present treasurer claims that of the \$4,000 paid him,

about \$1,000 is for extra clerical work which he hires. Thus, the proposed reduction is only \$1,000, and is thought to be warranted, as only about six months are required on the work. The proposed salary which covers part-time employment is based on the relation of the work to that of the Supervisor, who is charged with considerable discretion, and on comparison with the salaries of the treasurers in adjoining cities, which average about \$3,500, or about \$3,300 if the three largest cities are excluded. The work of these treasurers is as intensive as in the township, and in most cases they are required to do much clerical work similar to the township treasurer. In addition, they are employed every day and must collect not only the state and county tax (winter tax) but also the city tax (summer tax) and special assessments.

Treasurer's Clerks—The \$1,300 now allowed by the township for assistance for the treasurer to collect the tax it is believed would be better expended in building up a clerical force to operate during the whole year, which would give him the assistance he is now receiving from temporary clerks.

Clerk—The amount allowed the clerk is \$1,000, which is perhaps higher in proportion to the work done than the other positions. Much of the work of the clerk parallels the work of the treasurer. For this an allowance of \$750 a year is believed ample. The balance of \$250 represents work relative to elections and other miscellaneous duties. The clerk at present is paid on a fee basis and there is no authority to change to a salary basis. On the present allowance of \$5 per diem, the clerk would be required to spend 200 days or portion of a day on township work.

A source of inefficiency in township methods is the lack of any adequately trained clerical force. At present the only full time clerical employe is the supervisor's clerk who prepares the tax rolls and assists in the collection of the tax. The treasurer is required to collect a million and a half dollars in taxes in four months, although about \$1,000,000 of it is collected in the first thirty days. It is to be wondered that with the present arrangements it is possible to accomplish the work. If a permanent force were

established in the supervisor's office, consisting of a clerk and a typist for work throughout the year on the tax rolls, they would be able to assist the treasurer in the collection of the tax, with resulting efficiency and economy.

Duties of typist—The typist would be mostly occupied in copying the assessment roll in duplicate, so that the assessment roll and the tax roll would be completed in one operation. Detroit has been using this method for some time and finding it highly satisfactory, using, however, loose leaf ledgers. It has been found that the system can be readily worked with the forms supplied by the state, if given to the township, unbound, when after typing they can be bound in permanent form. Detroit has about 480,000 descriptions of property which are copied by 11 typists, in addition to other work on the special assessment rolls, etc. This would give a load of about 44,000 descriptions per typist, or more than double the number at present on the rolls of the township.

After the rolls are completed, the typist could assist in spreading the tax or could prepare the tax bills on the typewriter, using a Wales or other attachment to prove the work as it proceeds. The exact amount of time required to prepare the bills is difficult to compute and undoubtedly it would be necessary to insert a portion of the information in long hand. For this reason, it seems that it may be necessary to use temporary assistance for two months, before tax collection time, to handle the work with dispatch.

Various other work of the township, now done by specially hired individuals, could be done by the office force suggested, such as checking the election registration lists, typing the minutes of the board meetings, clerical work in drawing off delinquent taxes, etc. It could assist further by preparing voucher checks prior to the township board meetings. This consists of writing the warrant and check at one operation, which would require the clerk and treasurer to number and sign the checks of those covering approved invoices. By the force assuming much of the clerical work of the clerk and treasurer, these positions would be more attractive. The clerks are placed with the supervisor as he may be continued in office indefinitely, but the treasurer must change every two years.

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by Mr. Moore that arrangements might be worked out for a central telephone switchboard at the radio station to receive all police and fire calls for the Grosse Pointe district and eliminate the present danger of public confusion due to the existence of nine different numbers for calling police and fire departments.

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Expense Shared

Maintenance of the rink and the cost of a supervisor is being borne by the village council. The rink is lighted by the Neighborhood Club, which also furnishes a warm dressing room for the skaters in its clubhouse. A carnival of ice races with ribbon awards for the winners on Feb. 9th climaxed the winter's sport, bringing out more than 250 spectators, including many village officials who gladly consented to play a conspicuous part in the conduct of the meet to make the youngsters happy.

The next big event on the Neighborhood Club program will be a Boy Scouts' rally on March 1st, when scouts of the whole district will gather for knot-tying, first-aid and other contests of Scouts skill. A Grosse Pointe council of Boy Scouts is being organized under the sponsorship of the Grosse Pointe Lions' Club.

Basketball teams, both men's and women's, have been distinguishing themselves this winter. The Grosse Pointe Athletic Club men's team

has not been beaten to date, the latest victim being the Cadillac Athletic Club.

Doctors Form Group

Physicians of Grosse Pointe have recently formed an association which meets every four weeks at the Neighborhood Club for a special noon luncheon and reading and discussion of papers. The last meeting was on Lincoln's Birthday, February 12th. The next is scheduled for March 12th. March 17th will be one of the biggest nights of the year for the Neighborhood Club, the auditorium for that evening having been reserved by St. Paul's altar society for its annual St. Patrick's Day celebration. An attendance of more than 600 is anticipated.

The Neighborhood Club is daily the scene of manifold activities from art, music and dancing classes to Badminton parties and pre-school and 'gymnasium classes for old and young. Sunday afternoon musicales have been a new feature this winter. Attendance at club doings is reported greater than ever before in its twenty years' history, which began on Rivard Boulevard in 1909, continued on Oak Street and now is reaching maturity in its beautiful \$150,000 clubhouse on Waterloo, considered one of the finest social centers in the country. It is open to all residents of Grosse Pointe, for whatever sport they choose. Those who join pay dues of 25 cents annually, entitling them to a membership card in the club. The membership now exceeds a thousand.

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT GETS 3-YEAR CONTRACT

An offer of a three-year contract at a salary of \$7,000 the first year, \$7,500 the second year and \$8,000 the third year was offered Dr. Samuel M. Brownell, superintendent of the Grosse Pointe School District the past three years, at the meeting of the Board of Education on Feb. 3rd. Dr. Brownell accepted. His salary at present is \$6,000.

In commenting upon the superintendent's reappointment, which was moved by President Fred Sutter and seconded by Trustee John R. Watkins, Trustee Charles A. Parcels expressed the belief that before the end of the next three years under Dr. Brownell's guidance the Grosse Pointe School District would be as noted for its instruction and its ably-equipped graduates as it now is for its physical plant.

An important step designed to improve the teaching in Grosse Pointe public schools was taken by the Board of Education February 3rd on the superintendent's recommendation. This was the adoption of a new standardized salary schedule for teachers, the result of months of work by the superintendent and a committee of principals and teachers. The aim of the new schedule is to raise standards, to encourage continuous self-improvement and to eliminate weaknesses in the teaching staff after encouragement and constructive criticism and coaching fail to produce progress.

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Few improvements and economies come in government that are not talked about first and often.

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