

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

Vol. 7

APRIL, 1930

Nos. 10 and 11

SUPERVISOR'S CLERK PAID MORE THAN CHIEF

Record of salary payments to the supervisor's clerk during the last two years, submitted to the township board on March 6th by the treasurer, has revealed that the clerk received \$4,025 during 1928-9 and \$4,050 during 1929-30. The supervisor's salary is \$3,500, plus \$1,000 for auto maintenance.

Justice Walter Schweikart, member of the township board the past two years, asked to see records of salary increases authorized for the clerk. Township Clerk Daniel G. Allor reported that the records were at his residence. Supervisor Edmund C. Vernier said it was his recollection that two years ago his clerk had been voted a salary of \$3,500 for work prior to December 10th and \$75 per week from December 10th to March 10th.

"That's more than you're getting, isn't it?" Justice Schweikart asked the supervisor.

"That's so; I never thought of that," Mr. Vernier replied. "Well, if we're paying him too much, we can just stop his checks for a while."

Mr. Allor promised Justice Schweikart to have the records on hand for inspection at the next meeting of the board, March 19th. (Nothing further has been done by the board to check the records, determine the clerk's salary or refund the township as suggested by the supervisor.)

New building in the Shores during 1929 totaled \$322,650, according to the following tabulation by Superintendent A. H. Bennett: Boat house, \$20,000; garage, \$200; residence, \$175,000; residence addition, \$10,000; repair fire loss on garage, \$3,400; entrance gates, \$3,000; residence, \$16,000; alterations, \$1,000; temporary school (private), \$6,900; tool house, \$150; residence, \$30,000; residence, \$14,000; garage, with living quarters, \$43,000.

RADIO LICENSE HEARING

The township board, April 10th, authorized Justice Walter Schweikart, William A. Neff, builder of the police radio station transmitter, and James C. Drysdale, police chief in Grosse Pointe Park and chairman of the committee in charge of the police radio station designed to serve the Park, Village, Farms, Shores and Lochmoor, to represent the township at a hearing before the Federal Radio Commission in Washington, D. C., April 24th. The township is applying for a license to operate a radio station for police purposes. It must prove at the hearing that "public interest, convenience and necessity" will be served by the station.

BOND VOTE POSTPONED TO AVOID CONFUSION

The Board of Education on April 7th decided to postpone voting in June on a proposed bond issue for purchasing junior high school sites. The board instructed its attorney to draw up a proposal which, if adopted by the voters on June 9th, would amend present powers of the local district in such a fashion as to permit voting on bond issues and as many other matters as possible at precincts.

Bond issues have always been voted upon at precincts in the past as well as at meetings, but a law adopted by the 1929 legislature unintentionally made it illegal in rural agricultural school districts to vote on bond issues in any other way but by ballot at a general meeting. The possibilities for confusion in tallying the vote of several thousand people on a controversial issue at a general meeting is prompting the board of education to seek voters' approval to make precinct voting legal.

A premium of \$6,104 was obtained by the Board of Education at a sale of \$120,000 Richard School bonds at 4¾ per centum and \$120,000 Trombly addition bonds at 4½ per centum.

J. LEE BARRETT CONSENTS TO RUN FOR SCHOOL BOARD

The League for Better Schools, an organization of Grosse Pointe citizens which has interested itself for several years in persuading public-spirited citizens of outstanding ability to become candidates for school trustee, has announced successful culmination of efforts to secure the candidacy of Mr. J. Lee Barrett at the annual school election on June 9th.

Mr. Barrett, a resident of Grosse Pointe Park, 1006 Kensington Road, is 46 years old and has two children attending the public schools. He is widely known as the executive vice-president of the Detroit Convention & Tourist Bureau. He is this year serving a second term as president of the Detroit Automobile Club and is a member of the Stone tax committee which aided the Detroit council with suggestions on its 1930 budget. Past connections included the Detroit Aero-Marine Engine Co. and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Mr. Barrett has had a summer residence at 1036 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores, for the past 14 years.

Two trustees are to be selected by the voters on June 9th for three-year terms on the Board of Education. Terms expire this June of Trustees Charles A. Poupard and Julius L. Berns.

Electors of Grosse Pointe Farms on March 10th authorized the village council to borrow half a million dollars for three civic projects: (1) \$36,000 to lay a 40-foot pavement on a 60-foot right-of-way on Lake Shore Road for a distance of 2,000 feet north of Fisher Road, augmenting the present 18-foot "bottle-neck" at that point; (2) \$150,000 to refinance a portion of the cost of opening and paving Kercheval Avenue; and (3) \$314,000 to construct the first unit of a filtration plant and pumping station at Moross and Lake Shore Road.

Grosse Pointe Civic News

Grosse Pointe, Mich.

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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 4,714

POP-CORN WAGON AT BISHOP AGAIN CRITICIZED

Why a pop-corn wagon should be permitted to operate in the heart of the finest residential district in Grosse Pointe Park—from which all business is carefully excluded in the zoning ordinance which officials heartily supported two years ago—has been a mystery to many residents the past year.

"It isn't hurting anybody, is it? Let the poor fellow make a living." Such was the gist of comments by village officials last summer and fall in response to inquiries and communications. A letter to the Commission last summer from a nearby resident who asked relief from the annoyance occasioned by presence of the pop-corn wagon was bandied from one official to another but brought no action. "Let him finish out the winter there; we'll see to it that he doesn't come back next spring," said President Alfred J. Garska.

On March 21st, the Village Commission "received and placed on file" another communication anent the pop-corn wagon, as follows:

Village Commissioners,
Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan.
Attention: Wm. P. Shoemaker.

Dear Mr. Shoemaker:

You have always said if I wanted anything done to call on you, so here goes:

Where does the pop-corn wagon on the corner of Bishop and Jefferson get the privilege to run in a highly restricted district, as I understood when I purchased property (1010 Harvard Road) and also a menace to traffic with autos parked for two blocks last Sunday, March 9th?

If you want it in the Park then why not move it down next to the village hall or the bus station where his business will be better and maybe you can get some free pop-corn, or put it on the corner of Balfour and then it will be handy to you.

I have almost had an accident twice on this corner by some fellow stopping

suddenly when he decides that he wants some pop-corn, and it is a nuisance a disgrace to any community. You do not see any such things in the other villages, so why allow this in ours?

Yours very truly,

B. Frank Robertson
1010 Harvard Road.

(Note—Mr. Robertson is president and general manager of the Detroit Chair Manufacturing Company.)

The pop-corn wagon is still doing business at Bishop and Jefferson.

LOCHMOOR STATEMENT

The Village of Lochmoor, for the first time since its incorporation in January, 1927, has complied with a provision of the charter which requires publication of an annual financial statement during the last week in March of each year, in complete pamphlet form. This first annual report is for the year from March 25, 1929, to March 24, 1930. It contains a balance sheet of assets, \$1,274,649.46, and a corresponding total of liabilities; summaries of current cash receipts, disbursements, bank reconciliation, bond maturities and building permits. In future annual reports, officials state they plan to include interesting information about the village, such as assessment figures, tax rates, growth in population and various other statistics and details.

An attempt to check the accounting of special assessment funds through the financial statement indicates the advisability of an accounting of special assessment funds separate from other funds, just as sinking funds are reported separately.

VILLAGE PARK ADDITIONS

Contracts totaling \$11,514 for construction by June 1st of a sea-wall and 14 timber boat slips in Lake St. Clair off the village park and beach were let by the council of Grosse Pointe Village on March 21st. The sea-wall, which will make an enclosed pool of the bathing beach, is to commence 90 feet out at the west line of the park and extend 166 feet from the Sherman to the Rumney wall. It is designed to preserve the beach from waves and high water, refuse, bugs, flotsam and jetsam of the lake, and to prevent youngsters from wading out into deep water. The boat slips will be in the interior harbor, not near the beach, out where the water is 4½ to 5½ feet deep. The slips will be 20 feet wide

and capable of mooring boats 75 to 100 feet long. A charge of \$1.50 per foot of length is contemplated to pay for carrying charges and maintenance.

TAX DISPUTE MAY LEAD TO SHORTAGE IN FUNDS

A shortage of funds for carrying on the township work between now and next December was seen likely at the April 10th meeting of the township board. According to the April financial statement discussed at the meeting, there is approximately \$10,000 available to meet eight months' obligations of the \$43,000 township budget. This budget was augmented after the start of the fiscal year by a special appropriation of \$12,000 for expenses in connection with the proposed police radio station. Poor fund demands also are likely to prove heavier than anticipated this year, the supervisor estimates.

The principal reason for the expected shortage, however, is the withholding by the County of Wayne of delinquent taxes due Grosse Pointe Township. This action by the county was precipitated by Grosse Pointe Township's supervisor's refusal to spread assessments, special and general, amounting to approximately \$30,000 annually for 10 years, which were legally determined, without protest, two years ago as Grosse Pointe's share of the cost of improving Eight-Mile Superhighway from Van Dyke to Mack Road. Wayne County is being held responsible by the State for payment of this \$30,000, regardless of whether the tax is spread in Grosse Pointe. So Wayne County, in turn, has decided to protect the taxpayers at large by debiting Grosse Pointe Township and reimbursing itself out of Grosse Pointe's delinquent taxes, the reimbursement to date totaling \$22,548.78.

The Board of Education, which last year received \$43,000 and this year anticipated \$96,299.61 in delinquent tax money due the school district, now seems likely to be deprived of much of this sum. Wayne County last year found township delinquent taxes insufficient to reimburse it on the road assessment debit, so this year the county is withholding school taxes as well as township taxes to make up the difference. The school board has asked its attorney to protest.

PROPOSALS FOR REORGANIZATION OF THE TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

No. 2—Procedure Methods

Assessing

1. The State Department of Taxation has advocated separate assessment of buildings and land. It is doubtful whether the township should change its rolls over at once to this system but an immediate start ought to be made to secure this end by changing a portion of the assessments each year, so that in, say, five years all assessments will be on this basis.

2. To secure the above in a scientific manner, some system ought immediately to be placed into effect of valuing the land separate from the improvement, so that all property will be valued equitably. The first step is to prepare a Land Value Map. This would be a map on a large scale (1 mile—10 inches) on which would be inserted the value of all land per front foot as it is placed on the assessment rolls. Corrections would be made to the map when the land is re-assessed. The next step would be a tax map, which might consist of the plats of all parcels as brought in as a subdivision. On such maps, the location of all improvements ought to be indicated. The value of such record is to assure that every parcel is assessed.

3. Assessments and tax rolls can be written on the typewriter, using the forms supplied by the state, if care is taken to keep the folios in proper rotation. This not only saves time and makes a neater roll, but requires only one proof reading to assure correctness.

4. The name and address of each taxpayer ought to be shown on the tax roll, using two lines to each description. By law, it is required that the name be shown, and the addition of the address is made by all progressive communities at present. The addition of the address not only permits pre-billing, which the taxpayer has a right to expect regardless of the attitude of the treasurer, but also removes any criticism which might be made that the assessing officer makes it difficult to check assessments when only the subdivision description or description by metes and bounds is given.

5. The township officers ought to join with other communities whenever opportunity presents itself, to

urge legislation either permitting more time in which tax bills can be prepared, or a change in the present method of settlement with the state and county.

Collection of Tax

6. It is recommended that the system of autographic registers for preparing the tax bills be discarded in favor of the former method of using the padded forms.

7. Attention is drawn to the fact that the use of temporary clerical assistance by the treasurer, which changes when he leaves office, results in inefficiency and liability to errors. Anything done to further the keeping of the same group from year to year adds much to the service rendered the taxpayer.

8. It would be to the best interests of the township to vote a salary to the treasurer to represent the actual work performed personally by him, exclusive of any clerical assistance. Extra clerks, as required, ought to be paid by the township board, and such salaries appear in the financial records of the township. Such an arrangement does not conflict with the statutes, for in reality no deputy (who must be paid by the treasurer) is now appointed in the township—just temporary assistance to help at collection time. Each clerk having access to township money ought to be properly bonded.

Elections

9. Election boards ought to be kept to the minimum of five as prescribed by law, which should be easily able to care for the vote when precincts are properly divided. In case of an extra heavy vote, an extra clerk could be added to those precincts where the registration is heavy. (The township now has six precincts.)

10. The fee paid the member of each election precinct board should be the same. In case of a heavy vote, clerks should be added, not the fee raised. It is suggested that the fee be set at \$16 per diem, as in Detroit. If the suggestion is adopted of maintaining the election board of five members in the smaller precincts and six in the larger, the cost per election would be \$544. For the year 1926-7, the average fee was

\$16.90, or a total of \$744. This would mean a net saving of \$200 for each election, or about \$1,500 for the year. A uniform fee with a fairly permanent board works no hardship, as the heavy elections are balanced by light ones.

11. If a permanent board of election officials cannot be secured from the male voters, recourse should be made to public-spirited women who are able to assume this work, as is now common in most communities.

12. The position of gate-keeper ought to be eliminated, as it does not serve a useful function. The villages ought to supply a police officer to maintain peace without charge, with a resulting saving to the taxpayer.

Accounting and Budget

13. The budget ought to be set up in a more approved form than at present, either along the lines given in this report (Civic News, January, 1930) or in some similar manner.

14. Every effort should be made to raise by taxation only sufficient money for the current year operation. If, after a careful check of the present accounts, it is found that a surplus exists, as would appear to be the case, it ought to be credited to the tax rate.

15. In order not to have deficiencies, which are now protected by the surpluses carried forward from year to year, some means of checking the budget expenditures should be installed. This can be done by using an accounting system. This work ought to be done by the treasurer.

Control Accounts

16. Some changes ought to be made in the bookkeeping system. The public accountant has suggested in his report items which should be incorporated in order to obtain necessary information for the township officers. Undoubtedly the accountant could set up a system conforming to good accounting practice, giving the information readily which is now secured only after extensive scrutiny of the accounts, and yet simple enough to be understood by those trusted with making the actual entries.

Annual Report

17. The present annual report conforms to the requirements of the law, yet is not an informative document. To prevent any criticism of the motives of the township officers,

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(Continued from Page 3, Col. 3)

it ought to show clearly and distinctly the cost of each activity of the township during the period covered. In order to do this, disbursements of funds is not the best method, although that should be shown also. The cost shown along some lines similar to that indicated in the budget given in this report (Civic News, January, 1930) will give to the taxpayer the exact cost of each activity. (The April, 1930, report was a considerable improvement over past reports, but there is still room for improvement.) Further, there is no reason why other interesting information cannot be shown, such as number receiving poor relief, the average amount paid per family, etc. Also, the number of voters in each election, assessed valuation in each village, etc. These items are suggestive only—perhaps others are more important to the taxpayer in the territory, but the annual report ought to be prepared more along the lines of a year book than a financial statement, if the township officers wish to inform the voters of their stewardship during the past year.

Poor Fund

18. The details of the poor fund ought to be filed with the township clerk, as required by law. These details ought to give the exact total cost for each family by items, so that in an audit of the township records the information would be readily available. The total, of course, ought to check with the amount shown in the annual report.

Sinking Fund

19. Some thought ought to be given to transferring the custody of sinking funds to some trust company which will administer it in such a manner that at the maturity of the bonds, the money to redeem them will be readily available. This matter is growing in favor as more of the smaller units responsible for sinking funds are giving the administration to a professional group in a trust company. (This has been done; the township has a "safekeeping" account with the Detroit & Security Trust Co.)

General

20. All expense authorized by the township board which will total to more than possibly \$50 ought to be subject to a bid by responsible vendors. When the township hall was remodeled all work was authorized only after receiving competitive bids. But, so far as can be determined, this is not done for other expense of the township. Such items as printing bills, office equipment (autographic registers), coal for township hall (for winter's supply to be delivered as ordered), etc., should be awarded to the lowest bidder after competitive bids are received.

21. Close scrutiny ought to be made of all appropriations which are carried forward from year to year, to decide whether they should revert to the general surplus. There are items, of small amount to be sure, which give the impression of loose methods of supervision. For in-

stance, meals for election boards, payment for typing township board meetings, checking of registration rolls.

22. The minutes of the township board ought to be always kept up to date. There is no criticism of the method of preparation, as they are kept in a neat and orderly manner. It would seem that for the salary the clerk is receiving this should be a duty of his not requiring extra payment by the township.

This is the final article in the series on our township government. Material for this study was collected and analyzed by a member of the staff of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Inc., at the request of the Citizens' Association of Grosse Pointe Township.

LAWS BROKEN 21 TIMES HERE DURING JANUARY

Known criminal offenses in Grosse Pointe Township during January, 1930, as reported in the first monthly bulletin of uniform crime reports issued by the committee on uniform crime records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, totaled 21, including one case of aggravated assault, 13 cases of burglary, breaking or entering, three cases of theft under \$50, and four auto thefts. These offenses took place in the Farms, Village and Park. Lochmoor and Grosse Pointe Shores had no offenses to report in January, so their names did not appear in the bulletin although they are co-operating with uniform reports the same as the other three villages.

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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