

GROSSE POINTE CIVIC NEWS

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OF GROSSE POINTE TOWNSHIP

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COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BILL

There is a bill pending in the Legislature for the consolidation of all the Public Schools of Wayne County into one district.

The bill has been introduced by Representative Charles Culver and was presented to Representative Culver by Dr. Upson of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research.

The measure is the first step in a major plan that friends of the bill hope will some day be completed; that is a plan to have one school district for each County in the State. Thus eliminating over a thousand school districts, large and small. Such a plan, it is alleged, would tend to systematize and standardize school management throughout the State. The idea might prove to be popular in most of the Counties but in large centers of population and particularly Wayne it is very difficult to work out. This is one of the reasons why the present bill pertains to Wayne County alone. If this law can be developed in Wayne County, its general adaptation to the rest of the Counties will be comparatively simple.

Both the Detroit Board of Education and the Chamber of Commerce have appointed committees to do research work on the bill and advise upon its merits.

The main objection to the bill as it stands at present is in the fact that it does not properly equalize the assessed valuation of the respective districts under consideration. A district with a high assessed valuation compared to its real value might be sacrificing to a district with known low assessments. The bill is thought unacceptable to Detroit on this basis, and because of this is practically doomed.

It appears that both the Detroit and the Grosse Pointe Boards of Education are opposed to the bill. It is a question if Detroit would be opposed to the bill if an equalization of assessments were effected. Grosse Pointe on the other hand stands to sacrifice in either case.

Detroit has a low school tax \$6.29 but, compared to Grosse Pointe, a high valuation. Grosse Pointe has the lowest school tax in the district with \$6.22 and also has a comparatively low assessed valuation.

If the bill goes through in its present form Grosse Pointe would likely get an increase in school tax rate. If the bill were changed so as to adjust the valuations Grosse Pointe would apparently get both an increase in tax rate and an increase in assessed valuation.

The Grosse Pointe Taxpayers' Association, or at least some one signing that name "pulled a fast one" on the Grosse Pointe School Board by publishing a letter that blamed the bill onto the Grosse Pointe Board. The letter states, "Unfortunately, the Grosse Pointe School Board has created a condition that invites such legislation. . . In brief it should not be necessary for the State to step in to correct the deficiencies of this school district."

Dr. Upson when shown the letter said, "You can deny point blank the accusation that Grosse Pointe is at the bottom of this bill." He then told how the measure was a trial bill creating public interest for a comprehensive plan that may follow, and explained that neither Grosse Pointe nor any other particular district was the cause of its origin.

The letter in question appeared in *The Grosse Pointe Review*, of April 16, under the scare head "School Board to Blame for Legislation."

The more informed one becomes on the actual origin of the bill, the more preposterous this political trick appears.

No one seems to know who the Taxpayers' Association is. It is rumored that a few citizens are attempting to dignify their personal grievances under this name. If the Taxpayers' Association does exist and they sincerely think they have an issue to bring up at this time may we suggest that they

appoint as their spokesman some person of responsibility who will put any campaign they choose to present on an intelligent basis.

The Boards of Review on property assessments for the 1931 tax meet May 14 and 15 in both Grosse Pointe Farms and Park; also the second week in June in Grosse Pointe Village.

SHORES ELECTION

The annual Village election for Grosse Pointe Shores will be held May 19th.

The present officials are: President, P. N. White; trustees, Ford Ballantyne, Fred Behr, Chas. Decker, George Osius, Oscar Webber, and H. J. Woodall. Vacancies occur in all of the offices except the trusteeship held by George Osius. This wholesale election of officers has been occasioned by the recent appointment of two of the trustees to fill vacancies of two trusteeships that would have held over. Three of the offices will be for two-year terms, and the presidency and two other offices will be for one-year terms.

No candidates have officially declared themselves as yet. The last day for filing is ten days before the election.

SATURDAY TRIPS

To become better acquainted with the cultural and industrial life of the metropolitan area, public school teachers in Grosse Pointe are taking a series of Saturday trips to places of interest in and near Detroit. The teachers have already visited the Parke-Davis Co., the U. S. Rubber Co., Cranbrook School, the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*. Several other trips are planned. Edward E. Allen, administrative assistant to the superintendent of schools, is in charge of the trips.

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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THE SHORE'S CHARTER

At an election January 26th five commissioners were selected to revise the present charter in Grosse Pointe Shores: George Osius, Fred Behr, W. S. Fitzpatrick, Hobart Hoyt and Ford Ballantyne.

George Osius was appointed chairman of the committee and Elroy O. Jones of the law firm, Dykema, Jones and Wheat handled the legal work.

The Charter Commission completed the actual work of revising the Charter late in March and expects to have printed copies in the hands of Governor Brucker not later than the first of May.

The Home Rule Act requires that upon approval of a village charter by the Governor, it must be filed for a period of not less than ninety days with the Village Clerk before it can be submitted to the voters for their approval or rejection.

In view of the fact that the time required by the Governor for his examination cannot be anticipated, the date of the election at which the Charter will be submitted to the voters cannot yet be determined, but because of the ninety day requirement it is probable that a special election will be called for sometime in August or September.

The salient features of the Charter as revised include two-year terms for President and Clerk and a complete budget system. The Shores was fortunate in having as members of the Charter Commission men who have had considerable experience in the municipal affairs of the Village under the old Charter of 1912. Provisions of the old Charter which had been found to be ambiguous or equivocal by experience have been clarified and the powers of the Village have been broadened considerably.

"Plunker votes," so called, have been eliminated by incorporating into the Charter as revised provisions taken from the Charter of Duluth, Minnesota, which were held constitutional by the Supreme Court of that State.

Following is a table of contents which gives some idea of the subjects covered by the revision:

Chapter I—Name and Boundaries.

Chapter II—Powers of the Village.

Chapter III—Elections.

A. Procedure Preceding Elections.

B. Nominations.

C. Elections.

D. Oath and Bond.

E. Removals from Office.

F. Vacancies in Office.

Chapter IV—Officers and Governmental Plan.

A. In General.

B. Executive Departments—

(a) The President.

(b) The Clerk.

(c) The Treasurer.

(d) The Board of Assessors.

(e) Department of Public Safety.

(f) Department of Law.

(g) Superintendent of the Village.

C. Legislative Department.

Chapter V—Ordinances.

Chapter VI—Finance and Taxation.

A. General Provisions.

B. Budget.

C. Taxation (General).

D. Special Assessments.

E. Bonds.

Chapter VII—Public Improvements.

A. In General.

B. Streets and Sidewalks.

C. Paving and Bridges.

D. Sewers, Drains and Water Courses.

E. Water Works.

F. Light, Heat and Power.

G. Harbors, Wharves and Ferries.

Chapter VIII—Appropriation of Private Property.

Chapter IX—Contracts and Franchises.

A. Contracts.

B. Franchises.

Chapter X—Miscellaneous.

General nursing service is offered to the community between the hours of 8:30 a. m. and 5:00 p. m. for anyone ill at home for a period not to exceed three hours each visit. Appointment nursing is given at a definite time throughout the 24 hours and for this convenience a higher fee is required. In addition to her calls Miss Browne examines the children who come to the Pre-School at the Neighborhood Club every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

The fees are divided into two classes—on a Visit Basis there is a sliding scale up to \$1.25 for a single case and \$2.00 for mother and baby. Part pay and free visits are given when indicated and are financed by the Detroit Community Fund. The other class of fee is for Appointment Basis which is \$2.00 for the first hour and 50 cents for each additional half hour.

The Visiting Nurse Association has a contract to give care to the policy holders of various insurance companies as, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, John Hancock Life Insurance Company, The Maccabees, etc., subject to the rules of each company and to the rules of the Association.

Miss Browne will be at the Neighborhood Club Station every day between 8:30 and 9:00 a. m. and at 1 o'clock every day except Thursday. Call Niagara 0771.

VILLAGE ELECTIONS

The results of the Village elections for March were as follows:

Grosse Pointe Park, Otto Groehn, Jos. Kolley and John Verlinden were re-elected commissioners and Waldo Berns, clerk.

In Grosse Pointe Village, Leo Teetart, Dan Cronin, and Herbert Trix were re-elected trustees. R. P. Connor was re-elected president and Norbert Neff, clerk. Edwin Watko became the new treasurer.

In the Farms, Michael Beaupre was elected president, Francis Hock, Herbert Hall and John Grylls trustees. John Kerby retained the clerkship and G. Meldrum was elected treasurer with Walter Allard, assessor.

In Lockmoor Village, Edmund Vernier was elected president. For clerk, Philip Allard, and for treasurer, George Schafer. The new commissioners are W. J. Michaux, Jules De Porré, and Paul Paulsen. Leo Athman was elected assessor.

VISITING NURSE

A Sub-station of the Visiting Nurse Association has been established at the Neighborhood Club for the Grosse Pointe districts, under the direction of Miss Theresa J. Browne, R.N.

COMPARING COST

In the March issue of the Civic News it was pointed out that our School cost compared to our local government cost was below average. Figures and charts demonstrated that our schools cost us 33% of our local taxes while the average district in Michigan spends 50% of its local tax money on education.

Let us continue with a comparison of Grosse Pointe School cost with some of our neighbors.

The ten districts in the following chart were taken because of their convenience to reach by motor in collecting the data. All the information was obtained by personal interviews with

responsible members of the school administrative departments and the data was written down and signed by officials of the respective districts.

This signed and personally collected information was taken to the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research for a disinterested computation and check up. Acknowledgement and appreciation is hereby made to the Bureau for this work.

The collection and computation of the following chart took 71 working hours. It was made more difficult because the Grosse Pointe Tax Payers Association had written to those superintendents personally interviewed, a

letter which implied that Grosse Pointe was compiling "statistics showing how much higher your school tax rate is than ours" (meaning Grosse Pointe), and by these figures "might lead to the conclusion that your educational system is costly if not extravagant." When the situation was explained, however, each district interviewed was willing to give any statistics they possessed.

Every care was taken to make certain each district was giving corresponding figures covering the same items and same periods of time. We want our readers to realize the significance of this chart at this time.

Towns	Population	School Area Sq. Miles	1930-31 School Budget	Maintenance and Operation	Average Membership Per Student	Cost (\$169)*	Assessed Valuation
Grosse Pointe.....	21,428	12.	\$ 874,610	\$ 589,480	3,275	180	\$118,524,038
Royal Oak.....	22,904	10.88	768,747	548,140	5,844	94	40,572,445
Ferndale	22,000	4.5	661,813	504,209	4,980	101	22,218,000
Birmingham	10,000	8.6	510,947	374,423	2,492	150	22,232,535
Dearborn							
West Dearborn.....	10,500	27.	581,551	448,000	2,625	171	29,245,529
Fordson	40,000		2,137,500	1,494,500	8,156	183	203,615,143
Hamtramck	56,268	2.09	2,361,661	2,113,383	11,907	177	116,000,000
Melvindale	4,050	4.25	250,490	157,978	1,150	137	17,538,638
Lincoln Park.....	13,000	7.	406,270	298,885	3,023	99	26,747,670
Highland Park.....	52,959	3.	1,778,560	1,428,175	8,945	160	132,744,600

Let us see what Grosse Pointe's relative position is on this chart of ten districts.

From the standpoint of population or per capita cost, Grosse Pointe is 6th, listing the districts from the most expensive down.

From the standpoint of area, or cost per square mile served, Grosse Pointe is 5th.

From the standpoint of cost per student Grosse Pointe is 4th if the figure 169* is used and 2nd if the figure 180 is used.

The Bureau of Governmental Research give the estimated per student cost of Grosse Pointe as \$180 on the basis of \$589,480 for operation and maintenance. A \$35,000 saving in this year's expected expenses brings the actual per student cost down to \$169. The Bureau felt that for comparative purposes the figure \$180 would have to be taken because of the possibility that similar savings not recorded in the data may have occurred in some of the other districts. Bear in mind, however, that the actual per student cost of Grosse Pointe on this basis of figures is \$169.

Notice that the sum of \$35,000 pulls our student cost down from \$180 to \$169. This gives some idea of what a variable figure the per student cost is. It is not uncommon for a district to vary as much as \$50 from one year to another on this item. In districts where the attendance is small the variation up or down of the school membership even to the extent of a few pupils will sharply affect the per student cost.

On the other hand we find total budgets and tax rates more constant from year to year, and it is the total cost and tax rate that is the contact point of the school cost and the taxpayer.

From the standpoint of assessed valuation or tax rate our district is the lowest on the chart. In fact of 150 districts in Michigan studied from the angle of tax rate Grosse Pointe was the lowest.

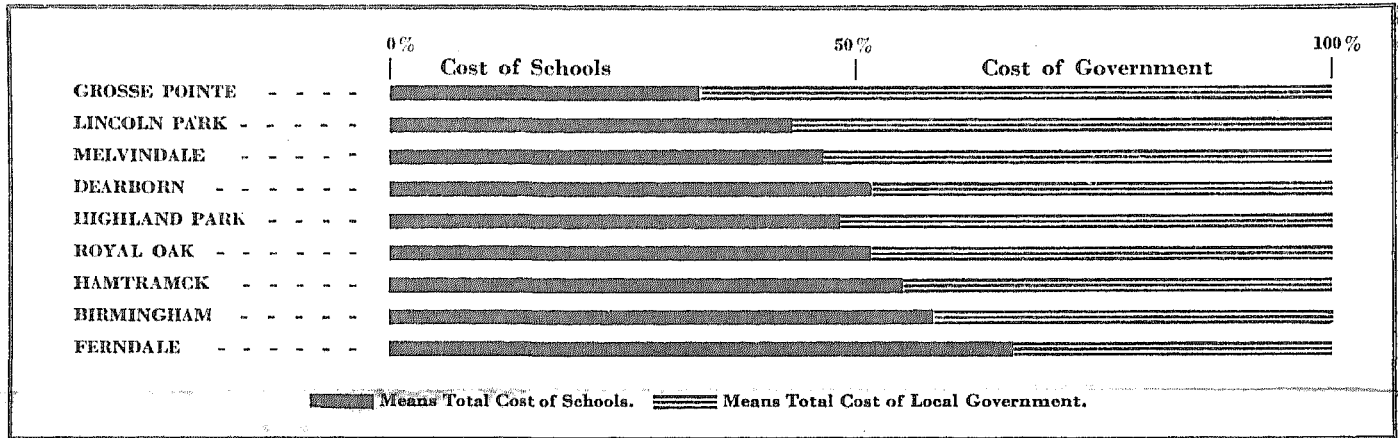
These conclusions indicate that from the point of average Grosse Pointe would rate about in the middle of the 10 districts considered. All things considered it is a fair statement to say that Grosse Pointe has a normal school cost. Certainly no critic can maintain that our school budget is "out of line";

either from the standpoint of cost of maintenance and operation, or from that of total cost, which would include our building programme.

A great deal of local accusation has been recently aimed at our school district on the grounds of school cost. Most of this criticism has been given in broad terms and appears to be attempts to inform a public before the critic has taken the time and trouble to inform himself. Much of the criticism shows evidence of the critic starting out with a preconceived prejudice and then hand picking the facts to support his point. The accompanying chart, however, gives the pros and cons of the story in figures.

We can only find out if we have a cheap or a costly school system by comparing with others. It is an easy matter to pick school districts here and there that by comparison would make it appear that our school district was low in cost; also, to pick districts that would make our school cost look exorbitant. The above chart is a comparison of school districts high and low in cost, a comparison with our neighbors just as they come.

HOW THE 10 DISTRICTS COMPARE IN SCHOOL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COST.



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