

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 86

**Progress Report
Hennepin County Budget**

April 1958

Citizens League
601 Syndicate Building
Minneapolis 2, Minnesota

February 11, 1958

TO: County Budget Committee

FROM: Les Wakefield, Chairman

SUBJECT: Proposed Committee Progress Report to Board of Directors

Thus far the County Budget Committee has held five (5) general meetings and one meeting of sub-chairmen. The five (5) general committee meetings are briefly reviewed below.

JULY 30, 1957. This was the organizational meeting at which time four (4) sub-chairmen were appointed and work started on assigning committee members to the sub-committees.

AUGUST 15, 1957. County Board Chairman George Matthews was guest at this meeting during which he discussed in general outline the budget factors including income estimates, employees, properties, assessment equalization and this year's budget. The committee thanked Chairman Matthews who agreed to meet with it again, soon, for the purpose of answering specific inquiries regarding budget items.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1957. County Board Chairman Matthews was again our guest and during the meeting he was asked several specific questions about budget items such as: (1) Is there any county-wide policy on rental of cars?; (2) Could blanket liability insurance policy be purchased for individually-owned cars used in county service?; (3) What study has been given to renting cars?; (4) Why does the county treasurer send tax receipts?; and (5) Why are there not more differences between amounts requested by department heads and amounts adopted by the County Board?

Chairman Matthews agreed to secure answers to these questions and furnish them to the committee later.

OCTOBER 31, 1957. Olaf Kaasa, Deputy County Treasurer and George Totten, County Treasurer were guests at this meeting. A full discussion was had regarding the question "why does the county treasurer issue tax receipts"? There appeared to be some very valid reasons for this practice. During the discussion it came out that the County Treasurer's office could function more efficiently if it installed what is known as "cycle billing" for tax statements. It was pointed out that a good selling job would have to be done informing the public why cycle billing would be advisable. It may require legislative change to make it possible.

DECEMBER 17, 1957. Edward Sedio, superintendent, Home School for Boys, and Paul Keve, Director Court Services, were our guests at this meeting. The committee members discussed in quite some detail with our guests the very large increase during each of the past several years in the budget appropriations for the Home School for Boys. This department or county service has the largest increase (percentage-wise) of any county department; and has had the largest increase for several years. During the discussion there were brought out several substantial reasons for the increased budget for this department. There appears, however, to be no yardstick for measuring the effectiveness of the increased budget or the benefits derived therefrom. It is therefore impossible to state that the budget increases are justifiable. At present there are about $2\frac{1}{2}$ boys to each staff member. This would seem to be excessive.

As a result of the committee's activities thus far its recommendations are:

1. That this committee and the League office co-operate with the County Treasurer's office to the extent necessary to determine whether cycle billing of tax statements could be instituted.
2. A thorough study be made by this committee in regard to the hiring of and insuring of private cars for county use, versus a county-owned car-pool for use of county employees.
3. A more detailed study by the budget committee of the Home School for Boys which would include comparisons with other similar institutions.
4. That the County Board request departments to furnish work load and performance data with their budget requests so that the Board and the public will have a more intelligent way of appraising departmental budgets.

The Committee's sub committee on Municipal Building Commission, under Stuart Peterson, is continuing its analysis of the operations of the MBC and hopes to bring in a report soon.