

Bloomfield Hills Approves Budget

At the meeting on May 23 of the Bloomfield Hills Commission the 1944-45 city budget was adopted, providing for a total sum of \$65,200 for city expenses. Of this sum the tax level is \$34,540 with an additional sum of \$5,000 known as the estimated deficiency in tax collections.

The budget report disclosed cash on hand of \$20,000 and other income totaling \$10,700. The city board of review reported the assessed valuation of city property at \$4,960,400, which is reduction of \$11,600 from last year's figure.

The required tax rate was announced as \$9.74 per one thousand dollars in assessed valuation.

The budget items included: administration, \$9,950; police department, \$24,510; fire department, \$2,220; highway department, \$13,820; municipal building, \$1,300; contingencies, \$5,000 and depreciation \$500.

The budget hearing failed to excite much interest in the Hills, it is reported, and there were no citizens present at the meeting.

Mailman Worried By Sailors Named Smith

There are 16,000 sailors named Smith and 200 of them have the same first name and middle initial—so the Office of War Information has suggested that home folks spell out all middle names when addressing letters to Navy Men.

Birmingham and this part of the country have sent their share of Smiths, Johnsons, Browns and Williamses to the war service.

An estimate that 15 per cent of overseas mail is carelessly or insufficiently addressed was made in the OWI's report on why letters from the United States take detours before reaching the boys over there.

The master index of the Veterans Administration now carries the names of 10,000,000 veterans of all wars, living and dead. They include more than 2,000,000 Smiths, 1,000,000 Johnsons, 1,000,000 Browns, 92,000 Williamses and 88,000 Joneses at least 12,000 of the Smiths are John Smiths.

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Corson Explains City's System of Street Pavement

Improvement of streets of the city continues to demand attention of the City Commission and of many residents of the city. At a recent meeting, the Commission studied needs for improvement of a number of yards of streets which have become worn by heavy traffic. The matter was called to the attention of the Commission by City Manager Harold Corson who made a written report on general street improvement and on the request of residents of Holland avenue area for improvement of their street by the city.

Mr. Corson's report, considered a very clear statement of the street improvement system, follows:

To the Honorable City Commission Gentlemen:

I wish to make the following report regarding the petition that was presented to the Commission at the meeting of May 8, 1944 and which was referred to me.

The City of Birmingham for 20 years has made a practice of constructing such improvements as the water mains and road surfacing (such as concrete and gravel) only by means of a cost assessment in cases where the subdivider has not constructed adequate improvements at his own expense. These improvements have not been constructed by the City in any other way.

Under this practice, the City pays 15% of the cost while the remaining 85% is spread over the benefited frontage, normally at a uniform price per foot. The City also pays this same price per foot for frontage it owns (such as at street intersections).

The cost of road surfacing to the property owner varies with the type of surface and with the amount and cost of labor and materials required. Approximate estimates of the cost to the property owner for various types are given below:

Gravel—\$1.00 to \$1.10 per Ft. frontage.

Gravel with curb and gutter—\$2.10 to \$2.30 per Ft. frontage.

Gravel with curb and gutter and all appurtenances—\$2.50 to \$3.10 per Ft. frontage.

Concrete with curb and gutter—\$5.50 to \$6.00 per Ft. frontage.

Construction including curb and gutter is recommended as this type also saves with the drainage trouble in ditches and driveways.

Payment for special assessment improvements may be made in full without interest, normally within 30 days from the confirmation of the Assessment Roll or it may be made in annual installments, usually 5 in number, in which case the unpaid installments bear interest. The installments, if paid on or before the due date, bear no penalty.

Inasmuch as all of the property owners cannot pay their assessments in full soon after confirmation of the Roll, if construction is to take place before the last installment is paid, the City must arrange to raise the money to pay for the construction before it has received full payment from all the property owners. As it is no longer possible to raise this money by the sale of Special Assessment bonds, the money must be loaned by the General Fund. Several years ago, the City Commission forced an improvement until at least one-half of the property owners' share had been paid. Our experience has been that due to a fact that some of the property owners pay up in full on the first billing, this restriction does not necessarily delay the construction into the 3rd year. The more property owners who pay in full, the sooner this restriction is met.

Construction involving critical materials is now restricted by War Production Board orders. This includes the steel used in reinforcing curb and gutter. However, it is probable that by the time one-half of the property owners' share is paid in on any new special assessment project, the war restriction on the use of steel will be lifted to an extent sufficient to permit construction.

Holland Avenue between Terry and Eton has never had construction on its surface acceptable to the City for maintenance. Such gravel as has been placed there has been at City expense and for the convenience of City trucks. If the property owners abutting this part of Holland desire to have a road surface constructed that the City can accept for maintenance, they should petition the City to form a Special Assessment District to do so, designating the type they desire and feel they can afford. I would be glad to meet with any group or any individual representing a group of the property owners and go over further details regarding this proposed project.

With respect to the request in the petition that the cement blocks and wood blocking be ordered removed from Lot No. 2, this vacant lot has been inspected and its condition found to be such that it is not necessary if we could successfully maintain any action for violation of any City ordinance. It is owned by Charles H. Fancher according to City records.

The City Commission has been petitioned in the past to buy trucks from various streets but, insofar as I know, has never yet taken action to do so.

Sincerely yours,
H. H. Corson,
City Manager

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NOTICE

Weekly collection of rubbish and ashes from residential areas will be suspended at the close of the week ending June 10th. Monthly collections of rubbish and salvage will be made only on the last regular week-day of the month for each section, beginning June 26th. Paper collection will be made on the first Friday of each month.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
H. H. Corson, City Manager
May 23, 1944

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