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City's Growth to Require More Police, Firemen, Department Chiefs Predict

By ALICE E. MORGAN

Brief surveys of the past 10 years of the police and fire departments, with summaries of probable future needs were presented to city commissioners by department chiefs Monday night. A reorganization of the police department and the question of two new stations, the fire department were among the foremost items contained in the communications.

The increase in Birmingham's population reflects sharply on each unit. Police work has increased 85 per cent since 1940, with more than double the number of alarms being answered by firemen. Both reports show a need for additional personnel and more efficient use of the men now employed.

The reorganization of the police department has relieved Police Chief Ralph Moxley of a great amount of comparatively minor work, giving him time for the over-all affairs of the department, he reports.

In the fire department, Chief V. W. Griffith has been freed of much of the lesser important details through the appointment of the division chiefs.

ADDITIONAL policemen, high standards for recruits, better training programs and increased salaries have lifted the standards and efficiency of that department so that it rates well in all national standards. Birmingham now has a force slightly above the national average per thousand of population.

Fire department surveys also show that this community is above average in efficiency and below average in national fire losses. According to a summary of Griffith's report, issued by City Manager Donald Egbert, this is a tribute to the leadership in the department.

The police work has increased in all fields, from traffic enforcement through major crimes. A 1940 report shows violations of 561 against 8,725 in 1950 for parking violations. Other forms of traffic enforcement have increased accordingly.

CRIME PROBLEMS, on the other hand, have nearly doubled in this same period. The 137 offenses recorded in that department were overshadowed by 307 in 1950. The greatest increase has been in larcenies.

To cope with both traffic and crime, the department has been forced to expand, although not in proportion to the growth of the city. Police manpower in 1940 was 18. Today there are 28 men on the force with an additional man to be appointed in July.

A training program was started in the Adams and Chestfield areas.

This will divide the strength of the department to serve the west side residential area and the east side section heavier in industry and commerce. The two divisions would overlap in the Woodward area at present the heaviest concentration point.

Population growth will make this change mandatory in the future, he believes. Present plans would be for the officers, including new men were added.

Among the experienced men, however, several are nearing the retirement age. To meet the demand for officer material, the present force will compete in examinations for promotions with years and records of service being considered also.

In summing up possible departmental growth, Moxley pointed out that it has been estimated that a population of 21,000 in 1960 was quite likely.

"Such a population," he said, "would require about 30 or 35 men. Our present organization structure will work satisfactorily with a force of about 25 men."

IN HIS REPORT and recommendations, Fire Chief V. W. Griffith pointed out that sites for the two new stations which will probably be needed within two or three years were being considered in the Adams and Chestfield areas.

Consumers Power **Asks Change in Zoning of Site**

A request from the Consumer's Power Co. to rezone its property at the corner of Henrietta and Merrill from Business A to B has been referred by the city commission to the plan commission.

David L. Brown, division manager of Consumers, said the lot will be used as the site for a one-story customer service building. The change is requested because Business A classification provides that buildings should be set back 50 feet from the street.

Brown said the building couldn't be constructed on this property if the zoning stayed the same.

City Manager Donald C. Egbert recommended that the plan commission study thoroughly the desirability of eliminating the 50-foot setback provision in the zoning ordinance, rather than follow procedures which result in the rezoning of properties to avoid this requirement.

Copies of Attorneys' Opinions Requested

Mayor Chad Ritchie has asked Mrs. Peter B. Loomis, plan commission chairman, for copies of any legal opinions which are in the group's files.

Quite frequently in discussions pertaining to the master plan, there have been references to "attorneys' opinions" regarding clouds on titles if master plans are filed with county registers of deeds.

Barnum PTA Plans Father-Son Program

Movies of the 1951 Rosebowl game will highlight the May 4 evening program for ninth grade boys and their fathers at the Barnum school gym.

William Hohmeyer is program chairman with Malcolm Tindall as master of ceremonies, Vincent Seconline, football coach, Ross A. Wagner and Larned Goodrich will be guests.

City Considering Extending Sewer

The city is considering extension of the proposed Chester-Wallice interceptor sewer to branch up Chetney Court rather than to install a separate sewer, according to City Manager Donald C. Egbert.

In answer to residents of the court who have inquired about the status of their sewer project, the extension will be installed this summer, Egbert promises.

W. Bloomfield Board

The West Bloomfield township board will meet Tuesday evening, May 8 in the West Bloomfield township hall, according to Township Clerk Frank Hall. Routine business will be discussed.

ing that of the fire prevention bureau, to be located on the west side, with the well operations management at the Adams station.

His report points out that in the past the department has had no drill areas save the streets and no place where repairs could be made. Future expansion, as now planned, would include a drill area at the side of the Adams station, with adequate space for a repair department and storage in the building.

DURING THE past 10 years the fire department has had the added responsibility of three new wells, bringing the present total to seven. These are serviced and maintained, along with hydrants, etc., by department personnel. The men, while on duty, are in constant touch with the department and available for fire duty at any time.

The department is also facing a greater possibility of multiple alarms through the constant expansion of the city. The two stations would greatly increase their efficiency in such an event, by having equipment available on both sides of the city, located out of the heavy traffic belt, Griffith said.

Griffith's report suggests starting to build a larger force not later than July, 1951, in order to be in a position to fully man the two stations upon their completion. He points out, too, that not less than two years are required to make a proficient fireman.

THE PRESENT force consists of 20 paid, and 16 volunteer firemen, placing Birmingham with a 1.3 average per thousand of population among the top four in a survey of surrounding communities.

While each department is currently of adequate size to cope with local problems, the expected future growth of Birmingham is making itself felt and its probable demands will make larger departments necessary if the city is to maintain its high standard of police and fire protection, Griffith stated.

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