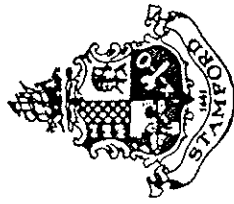


ANNUAL REPORT CITY OF STAMFORD



*for the fiscal year ended
June 30, 1950*

As required by Sec. 304.7 of the Stamford Charter, this rigidly condensed report brings to the people of Stamford an account, of our stewardship of their municipal affairs for the fifteen months ending June 30th, 1950.

Our new consolidated government, like a new infant, was born in travail and faced with problems and obstacles which could not be solved or overcome except with patient and continued expert outside assistance of various kinds.

So many new problems have arisen that it has been difficult to get enough qualified people who were available to solve the problems as quickly and as thoroughly as some would have it. It is easier to criticize than to try to understand a problem. We have been most fortunate in having the unselfish services and advice of numerous good citizens in solving many of our problems. We need more such city service.

Consolidating two governments is an entirely different problem from consolidating two businesses or two industries. In consolidating two governments, we are faced with all the problems faced in business and in industry, while, in addition, we are faced with laws, ordinances, Charter requirements and other handicaps which prevent speedy decisions which are practical, honest and profitable from an economic standpoint.

All who are qualified to judge, know that consolidating the two accounting and fiscal systems demanded the hiring of a firm of expert accountants, thus enabling our employees to continue their routine duties until the new fiscal system was ready for operation.

Requests for such procedure were not granted. We have gradually overcome the problems created by this failure but it has already cost the public at least twice what was saved by failure to heed our advice.

In spite of all handicaps, arguments, difference of opinions, and continued criticism (most of which was not justified) steady progress has been made.

In our accounting department, which had the greatest handicaps to overcome, we are getting close to a real satisfactory set-up.

Our Board of Public Safety has, without fanfare or publicity, performed a remarkable service to this community.

For the first time, all appointments, promotions and assignments have been on a non-political, non-partisan and purely merit basis in both police and fire departments. This Board has performed its duty without fear or favor and in accordance with the stipulations of the Charter.

I mention these departments first because their job is to protect the life and the property of the seventy-three thousand people in Stamford. Men in these departments have better working conditions, are happier in their work and their morale is much improved.

In our Service Departments, where we come closest to the people of Stamford, consolidation presented many problems. However a very fine job of Consolidation, classification and work allocation has been achieved insofar as tax districts and accounting procedure will allow.

Hours of work of former City employees have been shortened to agree with the schedule of the former Town employees. In spite of the shorter hours, extra sick leave and a better vacation schedule improved planning and supervision has resulted in a noticeable increase in production per man and per dollar.

Surely some comment is expected regarding the occasional friction between the Mayor, his department heads and the Board of Finance. It can be summed up very briefly:

1. The Mayor and his department heads, with years of experience, are striving to give the quickest, most efficient and most economic service possible to the public. They know from experience what it will cost in men, money and materials.
2. The Board of Finance, actually interested in the same objectives but lacking the same experience and knowledge of the work, and being still further handicapped by the Charter-time schedule, sometimes grants less than the minimum necessary to accomplish these common objectives.

It is not a campaign of malice but a contest of two different points of view between the groups with different qualifications.

During the year, we have lost several old and trusted public servants from our different departments and some have voluntarily retired.

During the year we have made 875 new voters: 423 Republicans, 367 Democrats and 85 Independents.

Our different Boards and Commissions are pretty well over the first rush of petty details, hearings and problems which public service demanded. Progress in some departments is more difficult than in others and because of this, progress is more marked in some than in others.

However, commendable progress has been made in all agencies of the government and, in spite of all criticism, this progress has been such as to command the approval of those who are fully aware of all the conditions with which we have had to contend. It is our job and our duty to the taxpayers, to return to them the greatest possible value per dollar expended. This we have honestly tried to do and, with few exceptions, the records will show that we have been very successful in so doing.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of immediate improvement and success is the conduct of the Hubbard Heights Municipal Golf Course under the most capable management of our Golf Club Committee. This venture will easily be self-supporting at a cost to the individual player, less than the cost of such play on a private course. Right now, the maintenance staff can boast of about the finest kept course in this area.

The success of this Golf Club venture justifies my recommending early and serious consideration of the purchase and operation of another golf course.

Our experience during the infancy of our Consolidated Government impels me to make certain specific recommendations:

1. That legislation be passed empowering the Mayor to appoint a Parking Commission of five members to be approved by the Board of Representatives.
That all parking meter receipts be set aside for the purpose of securing and installing parking meters, approved by the Board of Representatives, also for the purchase construction and maintenance of Parking Lots and/or parking garages.

All parking meter and parking lot funds to be administered by the Parking Commission, which shall have the power, with approval of the Mayor and Board of Representatives, to issue Bonds against the credit of the City of Stamford for the purpose of securing and maintaining parking facilities of all types, such bonds to be financed by parking meter and parking facility receipts.

2. That our local election date be changed to the first -week of October in each off-numbered year.

a. We usually have better weather and it is easier for people to get out to vote.

b. It would relieve incumbent officials of the terrific burden of conducting primaries, running their own campaign, trying to attend the Legislature, preparing the budget, then conducting an election. ALL during the busiest part of the year.

c. Quite as important, it would provide for the making up of the budget by an experienced staff of incumbent officials.

It would allow these same experienced officials to start the new fiscal year and have all departments functioning smoothly and to spend the first quarter of the new fiscal year while preparing for an election.

Being an election year would assure the best possible administration by the incumbents in preparation for the coming elections.

This is far more logical than having new officials, without experience, step into the job of budget making, legislative attendance, preparing of annual records and the mayor's annual message to the Board of Representatives.

3. I recommend that all the affairs of the Board of Education be returned to their supervision, including the purchasing of their supplies. They are just as good citizens as other officials and do a good job at purchasing. The central purchasing causes expensive duplication and does not save any money. Space in the Town Hall is not sufficient to allow the taking over of all the school work required by the Charter.

4. I recommend that a loop system of bus transportation replace the present unwieldy, expensive, time-wasting traffic hazard, spoke-and-hub system.

5. For several years, I have advocated the purchase of the property of the Cove Investment and Improvement Co. We should preserve, for future generations, the boating, bathing and fishing facilities of this area, before it is bought by private owners. We could restore Cove Dam and protect property values, scenic values and health conditions in this area.

6. I recommend the adoption of an over-all pension and retirement system for all City employees.

By late September we expect to start the new sewer line from the Library to Canal Street. At the same time, we shall be starting a staff of lawyers searching titles and doing the legal work preparatory to starting the Cove and East Side Sewers. Actual work on these sewers will begin as soon as the legal work is done.

Also, we expect to start work on Vidal Park on the West Side.

We hope to have some of these long delayed projects completed, and others nearing completion, before July 1st, 1951.

We are installing drainage on Courland Ave. and Lawn Ave. and hope to improve the road surfaces before Winter.

Once our Bond Issues are certified, we will have our Capital Improvement in full swing.

This year has been a most trying one for all public employees.

I am grateful for the loyalty, patience and devotion to duty shown by nearly all our employees. I am sure that the public is becoming aware of their good work.

Surely we owe a vote of thanks to the Citizens' Committee, which made a study of our municipal government. Some of their recommendations require state legislation. Some have already been implemented. Others are being adopted as fast as possible. Lack of space forbids the use of others.

The financial position of the City is the strongest in years. Stamford is growing rapidly and that creates problems, but with the needed charter changes, we can look forward to a wholesome, well-planned growth and a successful well-governed community as a Consolidated City.

Respectfully submitted

George T. Barrett
Mayor

BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES

During the period July 1, 1949 - June 30, 1950, the Board of Representatives held a total of 23 meetings -- 12 of these were regular monthly meetings, six adjourned, and five specials. The average attendance at these meetings was 34 members. Meetings are held in the Burdick Jr. High School, where desks are set up before each meeting, for the Board members. It is hoped that a more suitable meeting place will be made available in the near future. Members of Mrs. Paul Moser's senior high school class served as messengers throughout the entire year.

TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

The minutes -of the meeting record the general discussion by members of the Board, as well as action taken by the Board. Copies of the minutes are sent to each Board member as well as to other City officials, the radio and the press, and are on public record in the Town Clerk's office. An index to the minutes is also on file with the Town Clerk.

Until March 15, 1950, the clerk was assisted by a part-time secretary. Since that time, a full-time secretary has been employed, who also serves the Board of Finance. An office has been furnished and is on the third floor of the Town Hall.

The budget conducting the Board of Representatives was in the amount of \$1,896.37.

In addition to action on required legislation, a total of 21 new ordinances were enacted the Board. The general feeling has been that despite the unusual size of the 40-man Board, the City's business was transacted in a businesslike fashion. There was little evidence of partisanship in the decisions reached. To facilitate the procedure, nine committees functioned during the year: Fiscal, Legislative and Rules, Public Works, Health and Protection, Planning and Zoning, Public Welfare and Recreation, Entertainment, and Steering. The members of these committees gave a great deal of time to study and interpret the problems in their fields in order that the full Board might be well informed on the problems at hand.

Following an inquiry by the President and Minority Leader of the Board into the procedure of the Purchasing Department, a special committee was set up to conduct an investigation into the question of non-conformance with the Charter. This committee reported to the Board on April 3, 1950, and the report is on file.

In May, two public hearings were held in cooperation with the Board of Finance, prior to the study of the budgets. There has been cooperation with the Planning Board and the Board of Recreation.

During the year, there were two changes in the membership of the Board of Representatives: Hilda Clarke replaced Jeanette Bell (resigned) of the 17th District; and Edward C. Hogan replaced Sherman Hoyt of the 19th District, when he assumed the chairmanship of the Planning Board.

Public attendance at the meetings was small, except on those occasions when an issue of interest to a specific group was discussed.