
County and Township Edited by Elwyn A. Mauck

Cuyahoga County Gets Administrative Officer

First County in State to Provide Expert Management

THE county commissioners of Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Ohio, have created the post of county administrative officer and promoted the budget officer to it. He will receive an annual salary of \$13,500.

Because of the limitations of state law, the position had to be set up as an assistant to the clerk of the board of county commissioners to be "referred to and known as the county administrative officer." The resolution of the county commissioners provided for the assignment of a number of specific duties to this officer to be appointed by the board and to serve at its pleasure.

The general function of the administrative officer will be to assist the board of county commissioners in carrying out its managerial and administrative duties. State laws do not permit the delegation to him of authority reposed in the board of county commissioners or in any other county officers or commissions. His work will be in the nature of that of an administrative assistant to the board.

Despite the confining provisions of state law, Cuyahoga County now has an executive head who, with the full support of the county commissioners and with the cooperation of the other elected officers such as the auditor, treasurer, coroner, engineer, etc., can be a potent integrating force in strengthening the management of the county government.

The Citizens League of Cleveland comments:

"County services have been steadily and inevitably expanding. The cost of activities directly administered by the board of county commissioners has risen from \$1,256,560 in 1930 to \$13,474,532 in 1952, and the commissioners have in recent years taken on such additional responsibilities as the construction and operation of a hospital for the chronic ill, the planning and operation of a county airport, the administration of veterans housing, civilian defense and welfare and relief.

"Furthermore, the commissioners are expected to take the leadership in meeting the need for more adequate and progressive county-wide control of municipal services. In addition, they must adopt an annual budget and appropriate funds and authorize purchases for all county departments.

"These are full-time administrative obligations which cannot be discharged by a part-time board without proper staff assistance. The new officer will aid and assist the board in the administrative supervision and control of budgeting, purchasing and contracts, the welfare department, the dog warden, the department of buildings, the office of sanitary engineer, the custodian of buildings, airports, veterans housing and civilian defense. He will have the right to confer with the heads of said departments, to receive reports from them regarding operating problems, and to report to the county commissioners concerning said departments, and he will assist the board in administering, enforcing and carrying out its policies and resolutions.

"Cuyahoga County for the first time in its history has an executive officer and is the first county in the state to have such an officer. This evidence of the intent of the county officials to re-

organize in the direction of tighter control and improved county management will result in greater public confidence in the county as the logical agency to handle metropolitan government functions."

Another Virginia County Adopts Manager Plan

The county commissioners of Elizabeth City County, Virginia, on March 12, adopted an ordinance giving the county "executive secretary" the full administrative powers of a county manager. This action makes the county the sixth in Virginia with the manager plan. The others are Albermarle, Arlington, Fairfax, Henrico and Warwick. Under the county's special charter, adopted in 1942, the executive secretary, appointed by the county commissioners, has only such authority as the commissioners may grant.

Civic Group in Maricopa County Wants Manager Plan

The Better Government Association of Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona, has been organized "to seek drastic revision of Maricopa County government." Approximately 45 business and civic leaders from all parts of the county met in an organizing meeting and elected officers. Recurrent incidents of waste, graft and scandal in county government have prompted the reform drive.

The four-point program adopted by the organizing committee is as follows:

1. Expansion of the board of supervisors from three to five members, all to be elected at large. The supervisors now are elected from three districts. Proposed legislation to make this change has been introduced into the state legislature.

2. Nonpartisan election of supervisors to eliminate "control of the supervisors by a party boss" and

"patronage control of appointments throughout county government."

3. Installation of the county manager plan, under which a trained man would be hired to run the administrative affairs of the county without interference from the supervisors.

4. Adoption of a civil service plan for all county employees.

The present movement for county improvement parallels the Phoenix Charter Government Committee's drive which led to improvements in the council-manager system three years ago. A member of the organizing group commented that the city had "set a wonderful precedent and demonstrated that we can have clean, efficient government if we work for it."

Arlington County to Vote on Manager's Tenure

The Virginia legislature, on February 27, passed a bill providing for a vote in Arlington County on the tenure and powers of the county's manager. Two questions will appear on the November ballot: (1) Shall the county manager be appointed for an indefinite term, subject to removal at any time by the county board? (2) Shall the heads of county departments be appointed by the county manager?

At the present time the manager is appointed for a one-year term, which is renewed automatically unless he is notified by the board of his removal 60 days in advance. Heads of departments, except police, are now appointed by the county board.

Oneida County Reorganization Receives Support

The reorganization plan for Oneida County, New York, proposed by a special committee of 25,¹ has gained editorial support in local newspapers.

¹See the REVIEW, March 1952, page 154.

The Rome *Sentinel* recently commented in part:

"The committee points out that in the 268 years since the formation of the first county in this state little has been done to alter the basic structure of county government.

"To strengthen county government and rid it of the inefficiency of an archaic system faced with the complexity of governmental responsibilities, the state in 1935 passed a county home rule amendment to provide optional forms of county government.

"Only three counties, . . . Monroe, Nassau and Westchester, . . . have availed themselves of the opportunity of such self-government.

"The Oneida County Survey Committee places the responsibility upon the citizens in these words: 'Since counties now have the power to change their form of government to conform with modern and efficient procedures, the responsibility for retaining at the present time a governmental structure designed for eighteenth century service lies squarely with the electors of each county and their representatives on the board of supervisors.'"

Louisville Paper Urges County Consolidation

A feature article in a recent issue of the Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier-Journal* emphasizes the need to reduce the number of counties in the state. Reasons for the present number of counties, says the paper, have ceased to be valid and the people can no longer afford to support this outmoded relic of the past. It proposes that the present 120 counties be reduced to 49, but concludes: "Perhaps a good idea would be for the General Assembly next year to authorize the governor to appoint a regrouping commission which, with expert advisors, would make a study and recommendations for

some such scheme as this, in whole or in part."

California Cities Continue Study of County Relations

The directors of the League of California Cities, meeting recently in Los Angeles, continued their probe of city-county relations. They have requested the Senate and Assembly interim committees investigating city-county relations to include in their studies the possibility of legislation requiring incorporation or annexation whenever an unincorporated community reaches a certain standard of urban development. Furthermore, the directors agreed that favorable league action on a county sales tax was contingent upon more general agreement on an over-all city-county program. In order to indicate a sales tax program which the league probably could support, the directors endorsed a stabilization program embodying a uniform 4 per cent sales tax throughout California.

According to *Western City*, the following general and specific items constitute the program of the League of California Cities. The league will:

1. Continue to work with the Senate and Assembly interim committees and in every other way carry out vigorously the league program to eliminate the use of general county funds for municipal-type service to unincorporated urban areas;

2. Prepare and distribute a report setting forth the legal problems which arise in connection with incorporation and the way to handle them, together with a positive statement of the advantages of incorporation;

3. Review carefully the law of annexation in California and in other states and other factors affecting annexation, not only in order to prepare a league report designed to be helpful in connection with annexation

but also as a basis for consideration of desirable changes in the annexation law;

4. Make a comprehensive survey of services provided outside of cities by the cities, the bases on which they are provided and the implications of such practices;

5. By a sampling process, attempt to measure the extent to which municipal services and facilities are used within the city by persons living outside;

6. Cause a comprehensive study to be made of subdivision regulation both inside and outside cities not only to achieve a sounder policy within the cities but also to point up the effect of lack of or inadequate subdivision regulation in unincorporated areas on development within the cities; and

7. Cause a study to be made of building standards within and outside the cities.

Cook County Government is Studied

The complex government of Cook County, Illinois, is brought under scrutiny in a recent publication of the Cook County Council of the League of Women Voters.¹ Cook County, with a 1950 population of over 4,500,000, is the largest in the United States. The number of governments operating in the area is also large, totaling 375 active taxing areas according to the report. To operate these many governments, the voters of Chicago elect approximately 125 officials while county residents outside the city generally elect more than 70.

¹*This is Cook County*, by Ruth E. Baker. Cook County Council of the League of Women Voters, Chicago 1951. 76 pages, 35 cents.

The task of describing such a complex governmental structure is not an easy one. This pamphlet, however, presents an outline which is understandable, although necessarily somewhat complicated. Emphasis is placed upon the county government but there is discussion also of the municipalities and special districts in order to provide the reader with a complete picture of local government.

The booklet first describes the principal elected offices of the county including the board of commissioners, president of the board, county clerk and numerous others. These descriptions are followed by briefer sketches of appointive offices, boards and commissions.

There is also a description of the sources of county revenues, agencies engaged in revenue collections and the techniques of controlling the expenditures of county funds. The collectors in Cook County, incidentally, are still paid by the fee system, their compensation being 2 per cent of the first \$200,000 collected.

The booklet describes the various functions performed by the county government such as law enforcement, health, welfare, road construction and maintenance, sanitation, education and recreation. Finally, in the summary, the distribution of functions among the various governments in the county and the areas of joint responsibility are discussed concisely.

This is Cook County is profusely illustrated with sketches, maps and diagrams. It contains many explanatory and summary tables. In brief it is a booklet which should be of interest not only to residents of Cook County but to all persons interested in the condition of local government in the United States.