

Highland Park News-Letter

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SATURDAY JULY 14th, 1906

Report of Finance Committee

In the matter of the request from the President of the Library Board that the Council levy \$3000 for Library building purposes, in connection with the regular levy for City expenses, to be made by or before the August meeting, which matter was referred to the Finance Committee, we beg leave to report.

We have investigated the affairs of the Library Board to a considerable extent, but not as exhaustively as we think they should be looked into, yet we find, as far as we have gone, much to criticize, in the conduct of the business of that Board, during the past year.

1st. We have examined the minutes of the Secretary of the Library Board, and find that at the meeting of August 15th, 1905, a "Building Committee" was appointed, consisting of Mr. Warren, Mr. Robertson and Mrs. Everett. That plans for a new building were examined and discussed, and were accepted, subject to modification. That the Building Committee was instructed to examine the specifications, call for bids and push the work of construction. At the meeting of September 14th, 1905, the Building Committee was instructed to confer with the Architect about cutting down the cost of the building \$2000 and was given power to contract with the lowest responsible bidders for the construction of the new building, (but no limit was named, or any amount specified). Patton & Millers' bill for \$333.34 was authorized paid.

At the meeting held September 27th the minutes, state that it was decided by vote to erect building according to original plans.

At the meeting of January 9th, 1906, it was resolved that the new building be finished at once, according to the original plans (Ayes 4 — not voting 2). (The By-Laws provide that on all expenditures of money over ten dollars, five affirmative votes are required).

The Building Committee was authorized to have the new building piped for gas at a cost of \$25.00, which is the only authorized contract on record.

With one exception none of the minutes of the Board meetings are signed by the Secretary. There is no record anywhere to show that the Building Committee has ever let a contract of any kind for the construction of the new building. There is no record anywhere that the Building Committee has ever held a meeting, and the records do not show any report from them of any kind in regard to the building or its construction. Mrs. Everett, one member of the Building Committee, says the committee has never been called together, and she has never been consulted about any matters pertaining to the Building Committee, and so far as we can learn all orders have been promulgated by the President of the Board, one or two members of the Building Committee sometimes concurring.

There is no record on the Secretary's minutes to show how much the building, or any part of it, is going to cost, and only one bill has been allowed by the Board on account of the Building, and that

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one is the bill of the Architects, Patton & Miller, for \$333.34.

There is no record anywhere in the Secretary's minutes that the Library Board ever received One Dollar from Andrew Carnegie, or has paid out any amount on account of the new building other than the one bill of the architect above referred to.

2nd. The President of Library Board furnished this Committee a statement of receipts and disbursements by him on account of the Library Building. By what authority he was authorized to receive these moneys and disburse them, we are at a loss to discover. By his own admission he deposited \$7500 of the Carnegie Fund to his own credit in the Bank and drew it out on his own checks without any authority whatsoever. A most astonishing way to conduct public business!

By his statement thirteen contracts have been entered into by someone, the records only showing one contract authorized by the Board, for the sum of \$25.00, and for this a bill of \$40.00 was rendered. We do not know who the parties are who entered into the above referred to thirteen contracts for the expenditure of \$17,533.61, and on these contracts the President reports there has been paid, (without legal authorization), \$12,199.68, there is a balance due on completion of these contracts of \$4,953.93, without any deduction or extras being considered. Of the thirteen contracts payments have only been made on five. The balance will have to wait until money is produced to meet the deficit incurred, which from figures furnished us amounts to \$3,262.29.

3rd. The Finance Committee visited the new library building on Decoration Day and inspected the structure inside and outside. The building is undoubtedly very complete and very handsome internally, although externally it is subject to considerable criticism. In our judgement there could have been a large saving in the interior finish if there had been any disposition on the part of the Board to economize and keep their expenditures within the bounds of the funds they had in sight for building purposes. But we have learned of no item where they have curtailed the plans or expense of the building. In fact, it looks as if they did not really know anything about the building plans, but simply gave the architect "carte blanche" to put up a Library Building.

4th. We note from the Treasurer's report that the Library Board purchased books last year to the aggregate amount of \$193.00. Is it not a severe commentary on the business management of that Board that they should be so economical in the expenditure for books (the primary object for which the Library exists) while a \$17,000 building is provided for housing them. The total value of the library books at the present time is said to be not more than \$4,000 while the building, furnishings and grounds, represents a value of over \$20,000.00.

We therefor consider it our duty in making this report to censure the Library Board for:

1st. The total lack of business procedure as revealed by the records of the Secretary of the Board.

2nd. That no report has ever been made to the Board by the Building Committee, and no formal meeting of the committee was ever held.

3rd. That there is no record that the Board has ever been apprized of the cost of the building, and none of the bills paid by the President have ever been approved.

4th. The President had no right to deposit \$7500.00 of the Carnegie fund to his own credit in the bank, and that, too, contrary to the advice of the members of the Board, and of the City Attorney and the City Clerk. If the City Treasury is a good enough channel for the City of Highland Park to conduct its finances through, it certainly

is a good enough channel for the Library Board to pay its bills through. Besides, the City Treasurer is under heavy bond and the President of the Library Board is not.

5th. The Library Board has no right to go ahead and enter into contracts for one dollar more than they had funds in sight to pay. They should have cut down the cost of the building to a sum within their resources, or else brought the matter up before the Council and asked for authorization of the extra expenditure before they let contracts for the work.

Under all of the circumstances, we recommend a thorough audit of the transactions of the Library Board; that the Council take no action toward providing funds for the liquidation of the deficit reported by the President of the Library Board, until the Board is re-organized by the appointment of such new members as shall be a guarantee of a harmonious business administration.

J. F. LEAMING } Finance
JAS. H. SHIELDS } Committee.
HENRY DITMER }

To The Republicans of the Eighth Senatorial District

I hereby announce myself as a candidate for reelection to the General Assembly, subject to the action of the Senatorial Convention of this District.

Inasmuch as it was the intention of the Legislature that each voter should vote for one candidate for Representative, so that in Districts like the Eighth, each County should have a member in the General Assembly, Lake County at present having the Senator.

I therefore ask the voters of the Republicans of Lake and Boone Counties at the primaries to be held August 4th, 1906, and request that those who wish to vote for me mark a cross in the square opposite my name on the official ballot.

Respectfully,

FRANK R. COVEY.

Belvidere, Ill.

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Reserved Seats 25 Cents Extra

Today Gads Hill Encampment Benefit.
Admission \$1.00 and \$1.50

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