As students of Allegheny, we are happy to consider ourselves a part of the Meadville community. The community and the communities in which we make our homes share a variety of common problems. Meadville has the power to become a model for municipal administration in Western Pennsylvania -- a model of how these 'common problems' can be met head on and faced. Meadville's voters showed wisdom in electing to establish a city manager program. However, we are concerned that the citizens of Meadville get what they asked for -- and not an official who is 'manager' in name only. AND . . . concern over whether this might not be the case -- together with an honest desire to stimulate more interest among Alleghenians in the affairs of Meadville -- led us to publish this issue as a special service to the residents of Meadville whom it can reach.

CAMPUS

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We trust that it will be received with this in mind, and that any question of 'personalities' shall be subjugated to discussion of the more meaningful, the vital question of the issues at stake: specifically, at stake in next week's elections to City Council.

Respectfully submitted, Larry Meysenburg, Editor, the Allegheny CAMPUS. October, 1967

The article below was prepared for CAMPUS publication by E. Bergin

Meadville-- City officials this week were being asked to provide an answer to a $400,000 question.

That question, specifically, is why Meadville proceeded on its own without benefit of federal grants or loans, to build a $791, 000 addition to its sewer and water facilities.

A Philadelphia-based spokesman for the regional office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) told the TIMES-NEWS that the department has a program that "grants up to 50 per cent of the costs of land and construction for water and sewer facilities. To be eligible, he said, "the project had to be submitted prior to July 1, 1968."

Mayor Francis T. Rice said that the city was aware of the program, had submitted a letter of inquiry but after considering all the facts, felt that the delay in obtaining federal funds would prove unreasonable.

"In talking with city, township and county officials in this area," the mayor said, "we find that delays of several years are not unusual, and that even after agency approval, the funds are often not available for some time."

Councilman Robert Christie, head of the city's engineering department which helped prepare the plans and specifications for the sewer and waterline extension to the 833 new residents annexed from West Mead Township said the city "looked into federal financing possibilities, but decided after talking to officials that already had projects pending that funds would not soon be available."

ANSWERS CRITICISM

Mayor Rice said the city's engineering consultants had also looked into the matter of federal funds and reported there would be a lengthy delay.

"When we annexed the West Mead Township areas," the Mayor added, "we promised them they would get major municipal services, including water and sewage, within a year. The people in the annexed area were calling city hall wanting the facilities installed. So we decided to go ahead on our own and do it."

In commenting on the issue of why the city did not get federal and state aid for the sewer and waterline extensions, Mayor Rice was answering criticism on the administration.

DANGER OF HALT

City hall had recently come under fire for not pressing for state aid for the project.

The Pennsylvania Director of Community Development in Harrisburg, Joseph Brady, confirmed Mayor Rice's contention that federal funds "are just not available at this time."

In an interview with the TIMES-NEWS, Brady said that the response to federal aid programs for water and sewer projects has been "overwhelming." "We have a long backlog of projects at this time," he said. "A wait of two to three years can be expected--and if more funds are not voted soon, this time lag will increase sharply."

Brady said that new urban renewal programs will face "long delays" and "realistically--if the current situation continues for another year or two--some urban programs will virtually come to a halt."

DANGER OF A LAG

The state official blamed the slowdown in urban programs on federal fiscal policies. "It is apparantly a guns vs. butter squeeze," he admitted.

Meadville's Water Street redevelopement program has lately run into some bureaucratic delays as codes must be amended, changed, updated--and then according to Mayor Rice, amended again.

Each change results in several months of delaying paperwork.

The mayor, after discussing the situation with a number of other mayors in the Northwest region, suspected that the bureaucratic nit-picking is a delaying tactic caused by lack of funds. In any case, Meadville's workable program of codes, ordinances, and laws has not been recertified to date--and without recertification, funds for the Water Street program cannot be released--even though they have already been voted by the Congress.

Planner Urges Meadville: 'Prepare For The Future'

By permission of the author and the SET

By ED BERGIN

MEADVILLE — The city should adopt plans and objectives to try and stem the outmigration of its young people, serve the large percentage of elderly-retired persons now living here and adapt its largely 1900-vintage structures to the 1970's.

This was the advice presented to 50 community leaders at a meeting of the Meadville Development Council Thursday evening.

Planning consultant Charles Reeve Jr. told the group, "In terms of buildings and structures, most of the city's housing is over 30 years old and at least 50 per cent of the dwellings are over 70 years old.

"In Meadville the problem is more of age and obsolescence than deterioration and blight. We must adapt the city's structures to the needs of the future."

Although he discussed the chronic outmigration problem that faces most small cities in the northeast, the higher than average percentage of older citizens and women here — the planning consultant found a number of optimistic signs.

"Since 1960 unemployment in the Meadville area dropped from a high of 15 per cent to less than 5 per cent. Manufacturing employment is up 28 per cent. Housing starts are up. Retail sales and mercantile taxes have been climbing steadily.

"If Meadville's leaders can institute policies to encourage expansion of existing industries and attract new industries I am convinced the 1970 census will show a gain in population. He admitted this forecast is largely dependent on providing jobs for the young people of the community.

Reeve explained that a plan is not a static set of specifications or a blueprint but a constantly changing document that must be continually updated to serve the needs of a community that is alive.

He called upon community leaders on the council to provide the initiative to frame the goals within which the city's planners and policy makers must work.

He devoted part of his presentation to discussing how the plan must be implemented, emphasizing the role of federal financing and the required 7-point workable program.

"In adapting a city to the dynamic changing needs of the future — programs are necessary which many cities cannot afford by themselves. Therefore the federal government through its urban renewal and planning assistance programs have formed a partnership with the state and local governments to get the job done."

Reeve said the federal government requires the 7-point workable program "so the cities can initiate for themselves programs which prevent the recurrance of urban blight and decay."

In order to be eligible for the federal grants the consultant listed the 7 sections of the workable program a city must initiate.

These include codes and ordinances, community planning, a neighborhood analysis, municipal organization and administration, capital improvements program, housing inventory and finally citizen participation.

Underscoring the importance of citizen participation Reeve told council members, "It is your function to guide the planners and administrators so the city's goals and objectives will be responsive to the community at large."

"The workable program is not and should not be considered merely another form filling obligation," he cautioned.

Reeves was hired by the city to update the 8-year-old comprehensive plan first prepared by Morris Knowles and Associates. The plan as well as the city's workable program must be constantly updated and recertified so the city can remain eligible for a host of federal aid projects.

In Council's budget and planning session, also held behind closed doors, Mr. McAllister expressed his opinion on basic fiscal policy. This opinion was not shared by the majority of Council.

McAllister was urging a "borrow and build" policy for such items as a new city hall, a swimming pool and recreation complex.

He felt strongly that in a period of rising building costs running seven to eight per cent a year, and with inflation running at two to three per cent, a community like Meadville with good credit, should be using that credit to good advantage.

"The difference between the nine to ten per cent combined increases annual costs of building and inflation and the three to four per cent interest rates available to the city-- is the money you save by building now," he stated.

The city's Budget Director, Councilman Donald Leberman and the majority of council disagreed. They continued to advocate a pay as you go policy and believed that the people of Meadville would never approve what they termed deficit financing.

Mayor Francis T. Rice explained that McAllister was hired on a probationary basis a little over a year ago. "It was the thinking of Council that if his services were satisfactory, he would be appointed as City Manager at the beginning of the Council-Manager form of government to commence January 1, 1968."

Rice said that during the past several months while planning for the new form of government, McAllister made numerous suggestions as to how the city should be operated under the Council-Manager law. "These suggestions," Rice said, "dealt primarily with the division of power between council and the City Manager and financial and budgetary matters."

Rice said that as the day drew near for starting the Council-Manager form, "it increasingly appeared that McAllister's basic philosophy of this form of government differed substantially from the unanimous thinking of Council and we feel it also differs widely from the will and desires of a great majority of the citizens of Meadville."

'NO SMOOTH TRANSFER'

The mayor said, that in the opinion of Council, "the differences in McAllister's attitudes and philosophy and the prevailing view of council, would not help to affect a smooth transition from the present commission form of government to the Council-Manager form of government. We are now seeking a person to assume his duties at the earliest possible date and are confident that by January 1, 1968, the city will be prepared to complete the change from our present form of government to the Council-Manager form as smoothly as possible."

Besides this very fundamental fiscal difference of opinion, a basic personality conflict so bitter that it affected their communication with one another, existed between McAllister and Councilman Robert Christie.

GAG IMPOSED

McAllister's frankness and candid answers to questions posed by the press, resulted in Council virtually imposing a gag on him in recent months.

For example, he had to submit a "script" of his remarks whenever he accepted a speaking engagement--and was once criticized on the Council floor for deviating from the prepared script to answer a question.

The McAllister affair, coming just two months before the city was to change its form of government to the Council-Manager form, has deeply troubled many Meadville citizens.

The chairman of the city's Multi-Racial Commission, Dr. Allen Crain is so disturbed, that he is considering his resignation as a means of "disassociating myself from this kind of city government."

Crain said he saw definite hope of progress in many areas and "for one who had hoped to see McAllister become city manager, I am definitely tempted to submit my resignation."

"I hope that the city manager would become an initiator," he explained. "He can be effective only when he can initiate. I hope that Council will not emasculate the job. I would not like to see the job downgraded from a professional status to that of a hired lackey."

REACTIVATION

Political scientist George Cole believes that Council may need the services of a disinterested third party during the transition period. He suggested reactivation of the Blue-Ribbon Charter Committee that made the initial recommendation of the city manager form of government to the voters.

"The city manager is a trained government expert," Cole said. "He is expected to have a program, propose a budget, know existing federal and state programs. It would be difficult for him not to be involved in policy-making. I feel the position should not simply be clerical, the city manager should be the one with the broader perspective."

"It is very unfortunate that this occured at this time of the year. It appears that some members of council are unwilling to make the adjustments in their personal power that the transition requires."

Leader Urges Meadville Seen As Solution To City Problems

By permission of the author and the SET.

MEADVILLE — Although the city is most certainly faced with many problems, it has the resources to solve most of them — provided the community mobilizes its leaders.

This was the opinion of City Administrator Horace A. McAllister as he discussed how the city will use the Reeve reports as a general blueprint of the city's future.

One of the city's strongest selling points is its position as a secondary shopping center for Northwest Pennsylvania. Consequently, retail and wholesale trade has steadily grown over the years.

"I feel that the area needs a public swimming pool and an ice skating rink — (a proposal included in the Reeve report) but I feel it should not be a responsibility," Mr. McAllister agrees that the city should renewal programs can reverse the trend noted that the Meadville area of Vernon, city, along with the Meadville and the East Mead school boards explore the possibilities of a joint recreation budget.

(This is an interview with city administrator Edward C. Bennett who is being groomed for the city manager post when the change in government occurs on January 1, 1968.)

by E. Bergin

Meadville--Question: You have been a city engineer for almost a year now, what have you seen in this community that you would like to change?

"A lot of our buildings here are old, something has to be done about them."

Question: What about getting traffic around the core business district?

"I really haven't had much chance to think about that."

Q: What about the city's urban renewal program that is stalled because of code enforcement problems?

"I need more time to get familiar with all things and programs."

Q: What is your job? Can you describe it to us in terms of what your duties are now?

"We've never fully discussed that yet. The appointment was made Monday. Essentially, it will be the same as before."

Q: You were an assistant city manager at Beloit, Wisconsin. How did that city handle the relationship between the city manager and the elected officials?

"Well, there were seven elected councilmen. The city manager had no direct voice in policy, although he could recommend."

Q: Let's get back to programs and priorities. Will part of your job, in your opinion, require you to list priorities for the city?

"Yes, we have to decide the things we are going to do and then how we are going to pay for them."

Q: Will this require long-range capital budgeting?

"Yes, I would expect so."

Q: There is a lot of discussion in the community about the need for more recreational facilities. What is the city doing to buy land under Project 70?--a $70 million state program to enable cities to buy land for open space and recreation?

"I need more time to study these programs. This program was not in my department."

GOING TO THE POLLS ? ? ?

the voters of Meadville want a city manager . . . but does the council? and will the new council you elect next week? CAMPUS suggests you find out -- soon -- and resolve to preserve the intent of your earlier vote ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !



EDITORIAL

The Allegheny CAMPUS is a student-run, student-supported publication. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of a majority of Allegheny's administration, faculty, or even its student body. They are instead the expressions of those persons sufficiently concerned about a given issue to write something on it for CAMPUS, using this format. GUEST EDITORIAL in this issue is by Ed Bergin, a part-time Allegheny student.

On May 1, 1966, the city of Meadville faced a critical personnel shortage.

The city needed two engineers (city engineer and assistant city engineer), a planning director, redevelopment director, and city manager.

The city still faces a critical personnel shortage. Council has taken a city engineer, and arbitrarily classified him as a City Administrator (soon to be city manager).

They have taken a councilman (Dominick Lemme) and appointed him to fill the vacancy as director of redevelopment.

They got around the planning director problem by hiring a part-time consultant. (Charles Reeve from Erie.)

They have attempted to fill the void in the engineering office by promoting an engineering assistant to assistant city engineer.

If things are permitted to stand this way, come January 1, 1968, and Meadville will be the only community in the state to have a city engineer form of government. We think the voters of Meadville approved a city manager form of government. We feel they are entitled to have a city manager.

NO CITY ENGINEER

Whatever a city manager is--he is not a city engineer. In the words of municipal affairs expert Pat Moynihan, "A city manager should be an urbanologist--concerned with all phases of municipal government from recreation to beautification, from traffic flow to shade trees."

City administrator Horace A. McAllister was fired because he was fighting for the powers and perofatives that the state law says a city manager should have. He was fired because the majority of the members of council would not admit the city manager into policy-making discussions.

We feel the citizens of Meadville, voted for and are entitled to, a city manager who is a complete professional. In a word, an initiator. The "creative tension" between a city manager who proposes a program and argues his convictions, and the part-time elected councilmen, could have been beneficial to the community.

We feel strongly that some of the things McAllister was fighting for, a new city hall, NOW, a swimming pool and recreation complex, now, are wanted by the majority of Meadville citizens.

Whenever a President stays up until midnight of the day his term ends signing appointments that affect the government that his successor will inherit--a great cry goes up all over the land.

Three of the members sitting on council will be voted out of office on November 7. They are Robert Christie, Donald Leberman and Charles Swick. In arbitrarily making a decision that will effect the shape of the city's government after their active terms are concluded--these men are committing the same offense.

But the biggest offense was committed against the people of Meadville--who in good faith voted for a change--for a progressive form of government and instead are going to get "business as usual."

You can be sure that the newly appointed city administrator will have a vivid image of McAllister's downfall in his mind--He will not propose, he will not present a program--He will be just what council wants him to be--a glorified errand boy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Meadville errors of omission in terms of cost, are often just as great as errors of commission.

City officials here owe the public the answer to a $400,000 question, or specifically, why they went ahead on their own to build a $792,000 sewer and water-line extension when a federal agency could have granted up to 50% of the costs.

The department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) can make grants of 50 per cent of the cost of land and construction for water and sewer facilities, but to be eligible the project had to be submitted prior to July 1, 1968.

The mayor and council admit the city was aware of the programs, but did not wait for federal financing because of the red tape and the felling that there would be a considerable delay in obtaining federal funds.

The Vernon Township-Kerrtown sewer program was federally financed, the same as the Conneaut Lake-Sadusbury Township program. Vernon Township is currently waiting for federal funds before beginning its extensive Beacon Inn sewage project.

The only letter on file at city hall requesting funds for the recent extension of services to the newly-annexed area was writte by former City Administrator Horace A. McAllister, but by the time McAllister had written his letter, the plans were too far along.

City officials said that residents of the annexed area were promised the services "within one year" and that their decision to go it alone was in keeping with that promise.

— Submitted to CAMPUS by E. B.

CAMPUS welcomes response from its readers; address letters to EDITOR, campus, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE, MEADVILLE, PA. Pseudonyms may be used only if the identity of the correspondent is known to the editor

McALLISTER TELLS OF TRANSITION

Council-Manager Form Government Explained

EDITOR'S NOTE: In January, 1968 Meadville will change from the commission form of government to the council-manager form. City Administrator Horace A. McAllister Jr., at the pleasure of City Council, will become the first city manager for Meadville. In this article, approved by the mayor and council. McAllister discusses this transition and its effects ment.)

By HORACE A. McALLISTER JR.
Meadville City Administrator

MEADVILLE — About a year ago, city council decided that they would hire a city administrator. Their purposes were two fold. First, it would give the council a good opportunity to observe the man whom they hoped would become their first city manager.

Second, it would make possible a gradual change-over from the commission form of government to the council-manager form.

I was hired and began my duties last August, then, in September, the council enacted an ordinance creating the position and outlining the duties of a city administrator.

The temproary ordinance which will be superceded by the provisions of the council-manager charter in January takes a definite step away from commission government and toward the city manager form. For example, the city administrator is a deputy to each of the five department heads and may act on their behalf in an administrative function.

He is also charged with preparing the budget, developing a central purchasing system for procuring supplies and materials, establishing a new system for the keeping of all official records and generally, in all fields, recommending to the council, methods by which the affairs of government may be improved.

This procedure appears to be working quite satisfactorily. In addition to assisting the mayor and the councilmen and easing their work load by taking care of a number of details for them, it also gives me the opportunity to gauge the temper and thinking of the community.

Differences in the Two Forms

At this point, I think it would be well to state the significant differences between the commission and council-manager forms of government.

At the present time, our City Council, which is the legislature of the City of Meadville, is also the administrative or executive branch of that government.

Administrative services of the City of Meadville are split into five departmental divisions with the mayor and each of the four councilmen heading one of the departments.

Therefore, in addition to the council's policy-making and legislative functions, its members each must somehow find the time to resolve the day to day detailed problems in administering a department of the city government.

This proves no small undertaking for men who are engaged in full-time occupations elsewhere and is cited as one of the main drawbacks of the commission form of government.

The other chief limitation is the necessity, in the interests of an efficient government, of obtaining five competent administrators through the elective process.

These problems prompted the Staunton, Va. City Council, in 1908, to hire a managing director to handle the administrative affairs.

Under the council-manager form of government council is free to devote all of its time and energies to formation of policy through ordinances and resolutinos.

The detailed day to day operation of the city is delegated to the manager and through him to the department heads.

Authority is not divided since City Council still holds final and ultimate authority for all operations in the city.

The manager's work is constantly under review through the periodic reports he submits and through investigations which the councilmen can carry on as a group or individually.

If his work is not satisfactory, he can be removed from office by a simple majority vote of the City Council at any time.

One of the mechanical changes that will take place when the plan goes into effect next January will be the appointment of a city manager as the chief executive officer of the city.

He will be charged with, among other things, the execution of all laws and ordinances in the city, the appointing, suspension or removal to and from office of all department heads and employes, the recommendation to council of plans for municipal improvements, and the execution of those improvements after council approval.

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