BOROUGH OF SEWICKLEY

Annual Report For 1956

The Borough of Sewickley

INCORPORATED 1853

Pennsylvania

January 31, 1957

Residents of the Borough of Sewickley:

This is the second consecutive annual report which we have published in an effort to acquaint you with the functions and accomplishments of your borough government.

Much of the description of the structure of the various departments is repetitious from last year's report. However it is hoped that the older residents will bear with this so that the new comers to the community will have an opportunity to get a full picture of their local government.

The other officials connected with the government of Sewickley Borough join me in the wish that this report will be of interest and value to you.

Respectfully,

F. H. Atwood

F. H. Atwood
President of Council

Finances

RECEIPTS IN 1956

Cash balance, January 1, 1956	$ 54,403.18
Real Estate taxes	120,777.79
Occupation taxes, prior years	190.04
Earned Income taxes	33,838.76
Per Capita taxes	16,839.20
Licenses and permits	5,537.20
Rubbish and dump fees	2,781.60
Parking meters	27,047.24
Police fines	7,335.80
State grants for streets	12,357.29
Repayment temporary loan from bond fund	3,060.73
Miscellaneous	3,346.58
Withheld taxes	252.71
	$287,768.12

EXPENDITURES IN 1956

Administration	$ 20,228.11
Tax collection	6,746.43
Municipal building	8,755.43
Police protection	62,685.84
Fire protection	7,930.41
Board of Health	2,151.77
Sanitary sewers	2,888.31
Garbage collection	14,333.16
Incinerator	5,500.42
Rubbish collection and disposal	25,150.80
Streets and storm sewers	57,893.99
Street lighting	11,058.39
Parks and playgrounds	2,218.79
Shade trees	1,046.76
Parking lots	11,278.27
Miscellaneous	5,071.71
Cash balance, December 31, 1956	42,829.53
	287,768.12

The fact that expenditures exceeded receipts by $11,573.65 was planned in advance, and the 1956 budget was prepared accordingly.

1956 Real Estate tax rate	12 mills
1956 Assessed real estate value	$10,312,830 (Est)
1956 Exempt real estate value	2,619,235

Exempt real estate includes schools, churches, hospitals, parks, community centers, the Municipal Building and public utilities. There is an unusually high percentage of such property in Sewickley.

Administration

Sewickley is one of sixty-eight municipalities in Pennsylvania which operates under the council-manager type of local government. Under this form of borough government. Council, which is organized by committees, formulates all policy decisions; the Burgess, as chief executive officer has the veto power over all ordinances and controls the actual duties of the police officers; and the Borough Manager administers the policies of council, handles the day to day operations of the borough, and conducts and submits such reports and recommendations as requested by council.

The Borough and Water Works employ forty-one full time and nine part time salaried employees.

BUILDING INSPECTION

During 1956 a total of 137 permits were issued, as compared to 120 last year. The estimated value of the work was $568,192.00 which is $82,547 higher than the value of work started in 1955. The largest buildings completed last year were the Mellon National Bank and Trust Company local offices, and the Mary and Alexander Laughlin Children's Center. A breakdown of all permits issued is listed below:

Nature of work	No. permits
New residents	9
New garages	1
New apartment buildings	2
Remodel & additions to churches	2
Remodel existing buildings & plumbing	113
Sign erection permits	5
Demolish existing buildings	5

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

During the year all the walls and ceilings in the Municipal building were washed and cleaned. New furniture was placed in the police office and the secretary's office, replacing some of the original furniture in the building. The coal burning furnace in the building was completely renovated during the summer.

In compliance with state law all the low pressure steam boilers belonging to the borough were inspected for the first time and boiler insurance purchased.

BOARD OF HEALTH

The County of Allegheny established a Health Department during 1956 to start functioning January 1, 1957. Sewickley elected to join with the county, since it was felt that this larger unit could in many instances provide more efficient service as well as eliminate much duplication and overlapping of services in the field of public health. The county will establish a branch office in Sewickley. The local Board of Health will be retained in an advisory capacity.

The Health Officer issued 23 licenses in 1956 to public eating and drinking establishments. He also investigated complaints concerning nuisance abatement. The bacteriologist made monthly bacteriological tests on all milk sold in Sewickley. Weekly reports received from the Water Works indicated that the municipal water supply was safe at all times.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

By yearly contract the borough delegates the fire fighting duties in Sewickley and Osborne to the Cochran Hose Company, a volunteer unit formed in 1876. The borough furnishes all the equipment and supplies, some insurance, and pays each member for fires and practice sessions attended.

During 1956, 24 practice sessions were held and 40 fire alarms answered. 7 of these were in Osborne. The loss due to all fires was estimated at $163,100. On April 7th the building at 504 Beaver Street, occupied by Green Engineering Company, Mooney's Market, and Rich's Store was badly damaged by fire. It was necessary to get assistance from companies at Edgeworth and Ambridge in order to control this blaze. As a result it was necessary for the building inspector to condemn the third floor, and extensive repairs had to be made to the remainder of the building.

GARBAGE & REFUSE COLLECTION & DISPOSAL

Sewickley Borough collects garbage weekly. It also collects burnable refuse weekly. The rubbish is used as fuel at the incinerator to burn the garbage. Non-burnable rubbish, such as cans and bottles, is collected every two weeks, and disposed of at the dump on the Glen Mitchell Road.

The Allegheny County Smoke Control Bureau prohibited burning at the dump during the year. As a result the disposal of large branches and limbs has become a problem, especially with the private haulers. These haulers are permitted to use the incinerator and dump for suitable refuse on a fee basis.

Spring 'Clean-Up' Week was held from April 23-28 for the first time in many years. It is planned to make this an annual affair.

PARKING FACILITIES

There are 320 parking meters on the streets in the business section. There are also 80 metered stalls in the Division Street and Green Street parking lots. These lots were constructed by the Sewickley Parking Authority and under a lease arrangement are operated by the borough. During the year it cost the borough $11,278.27 to operate these lots while the revenue from them was only $7,736.49. An unmetered parking lot is also operated by the borough near the hospital.

In an effort to extend conveniences to parkers, fine boxes were installed in the business section so that parking fines could be paid there rather than going to the Municipal Building. Monthly parking permits were started at the Division Street lot as an aid to all day parkers.

During 1956 private free parking lots were provided by Mellon National Bank and Trust Company, and the Peoples First National Bank and Trust Company. Zoning restrictions were changed to permit another free private lot for the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company store.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Recreational facilities are provided by the borough at the War Memorial Park on Blackburn Avenue, the Chadwick Street playground, a small park at Beaver and Broad Streets, and a park at Broad Street and the Ohio River Boulevard.

A written permit is required from the Borough Manager for use of the large pavillion and fireplace at the War Memorial Park. During the year, 60 groups of 2,655 persons from the entire valley reserved the shelter for group meetings, family picnics, etc. Reservations are not necessary for the other facilities such as picnic tables, charcoal stoves, swings, horse shoe pits, soft ball field, wading pool, and shuffle board alley.

A recreational supervisor was on duty at the War Memorial Park during afternoons, evenings, and week-ends from June 17th to August 20th. During this time he supervised the play of 3,071 persons, as against 2,184 the previous year.

There is no supervision at the Chadwick Street playground, but it was used extensively during 1956.

PLANNING AND ZONING

The Planning Commission held eight meetings, at which they recommended approval of four plans of lots; changing lot size requirements in the Zoning Ordinance; changing street width requirements in the Subdivision Ordinance; and zoning changes to permit the A&P parking lot. All these recommendations were approved by council. They also considered the sale of the park at Beaver & Broad Streets to the Green Engineering Company for the erection of a modern office building. This did not materialize since when bids were taken for the sale, council decided to keep the property. Plans are under way to make this park more attractive.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment held six meetings during the year, granted two variances, and refused four variances to the Zoning Ordinance.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

During the year 2,764 complaints were investigated and 1,797 arrests were made. The two police cars traveled 59,256 miles in patrolling. A total of 9,110 parking meter tickets were issued of which 201 were cancelled for valid reasons and 8,257 were collected by the end of the year.

One police car was replaced in 1956, and the red light system, for contacting the officers on patrol when the radio does not function, was extensively repaired.

A revision to the existing police pension fund, as required by Act 600, was considered at length, but no final action was taken during the year.

There are 10 full time officers; 5 part time lady cops; and a part time dog catcher in the department.

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT

In recent years, Sewickley together with Pittsburgh and its surrounding communities, was ordered by the State to cease polluting the rivers and construct a modern sewage treatment plant. As a result a bond issue of $700,000 was approved in 1955, and consulting engineers were employed to prepare plans and specifications.

During 1956 the bond issue was sold to C. J. Devine; White, Weld & Co.; and Thomas & Co. at 2¼% interest rate and a premium of $4,211.90. The money has been reinvested in government bonds at a profit until needed. We were fortunate in selling the bonds at such a low rate. The rate today would be around 3½%.

A tentative agreement has been made to purchase a plant site at Chadwick and Ferry Streets pending the approval of the site by the state. A strip of land adjacent to this tract was purchased from the P.R.R.

The consulting engineers, Morris-Knowles, Inc., worked on the plans and specifications during the year, but do not expect to complete them before early 1957. Construction should start next spring.

SIDEWALKS

For several years there has been a program to repair dangerous sidewalks in the borough. This is done at the expense of the adjacent property owner. During 1956, upon order from the borough, 42 walks were either repaired or renewed.

STORM & SANITARY SEWERS

As the first step in a six-year pay as you go program to finish storm sewering the borough, a storm sewer was constructed on Chestnut Street from the river to north of Kramer Street. State aid was obtained for a portion of the cost. The completion of this six-year plan will eliminate a long existing troublesome condition.

A new sanitary sewer was constructed under borough supervision north of Centennial Avenue on the Grove Manor Plan, and accepted by the borough upon completion. A total of 160 ft. of sanitary sewer was replaced on Dixon Road, which was broken because of the slide in that vicinity.

In an effort to stop the flooding of many basements and to keep roof water out of the proposed sewage treatment plant, 725 buildings were tested to see if the down spouts connected with the storm or sanitary sewers. Of these 402 were connected to the sanitary sewer. By the end of the year 94 notices had been mailed out telling the owners to divert the roof water elsewhere, and the balance will be mailed early in 1957.

STREETS

Last summer Farren Street was surfaced for the first time; Green Street was reconstructed; certain gutters on Thorn and Broad Streets were raised; curbs were renewed on Grant & Logan Streets; and 7,500 lineal feet of other streets and alleys were resurfacd.

A portion of Canterbury Lane was constructed by the developer and accepted by the borough. Now there are 17 miles of streets and 4 miles of alleys in Sewickley.

There were two bad street cave-ins during the year—one at Grove and Centennial Avenue and the other at Chadwick and Walnut Streets. Both appeared to be caused by improper backfilling in the past. There was also a slide which damaged Dixon Road near Farren Street. This slide also damaged several homes with the result that four property owners have brought suit against the borough.

A new street sweeper was purchased and an old dump truck junked. Most of the street equipment was painted and repaired last winter.

Streets in the business district are swept daily and those in residential areas swept weekly. Leaves are picked up during the fall, not only from the streets but also from private property, when placed at the curb. Snow removal, cindering, and salting are performed during the winter when and where necessary.

There are 331 street lights serving the entire borough and the three parking lots.

All elm trees and pin oaks on borough property are sprayed yearly. During 1956 trees were planted on Centennial Avenue, Cochran Street, and Charette Place.

TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

During 1956 a traffic signal was erected at Academy Avenue and Beaver Street in cooperation with Edgeworth Borough; a turn right on red signal was erected at the Ohio River Boulevard and the Bridge Approach; traffic parking was removed from the south side of Frederick Avenue between Broad Street and Walnut Street; and no parking signs from 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. on Fridays were erected near the hospital to facilitate street sweeping in that part of the borough.

WATER WORKS

The Sewickley Water Works is operated by a commission appointed by council, and it is one of the few municipally owned water works that operates on a non-profit basis. As a result our water rates compare most favorably with those in neighboring boroughs. The works not only serves Sewickley, but also Sewickley Heights, Osborne, Haysville, and a portion of Edgeworth.

During the year a new pumping station was constructed at the upper end of Nevin Avenue to provide better service and maintain a larger reserve in the reservoirs in case of a fire.

The Commissioners of the Water Works, Borough Council, and the State Health Department all approved the fluoridation of the water supply. The equipment has been ordered and will be installed during 1957. The Child Health Association donated $1,000 toward the cost of the equipment.

Highlights for 1957

- ☆ Commence construction of sewage treatment plant.
- ☆ Continuance of six year pay-as-you-go storm sewer construction and disconnecting roof water from sanitary sewers so that sewage will not back up into certain cellers after hard rainfalls.
- ☆ Installation of traffic signals at Thorn and Broad Streets.
- ☆ Reconstruction of Pine Street between Beaver and Centennial Avenue; widening of the northern end of Blackburn Avenue; resurfacing of 7,000 lineal feet of streets and alleys.
- ☆ Revision of the existing police pension fund, and possibly the start of a pension system for all borough employees.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Borough Manager's Office	Sewickley 81
Fire Department	Sewickley 183
Police Department	Sewickley 183
Tax Collector	Sewickley 707
Water Office	Sewickley 975
Union Aid Society	Sewickley 980

Directory of Borough Officials

BURGESS

Charles A. Woods, Jr.

BOROUGH COUNCIL

F. H. Atwood, President
C. E. Wahl, Vice-President
William R. Carson[1]
William B. Clarke
J. D. Culbertson, III
W. Stanley Diehl
Fred J. Menz[2]
Oliver McClintock
James A. Purdie
George L. Trudell, III

Tax Collector ..... J. Conway Macon[3], Lawrence V. Gibb[4]

Auditors ..... H. L. Carroll, G. M. Watson, Paul Ingram

Constables ..... J. J. Start, J. P. Bloomer[5], Samuel Bruno[6], R. J. Hays

Justices of the Peace ..... Lawrence V. Gibb, J. L. Heffron, Jr.

[1]Resigned December 17, 1956
[2]Appointed December 17, 1956
[3]Deceased March 28, 1956
[4]Appointed April 3, 1956
[5]Deceased October 31, 1956
[6]Appointed December 18, 1956

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Borough Manager	Raymond L. Howe
Solicitor	Roy Rose
Secretary	Edward Ellerton
Treasurer	Frank A. Nash[1] Homer Fisher[2]
Police Chief	T. J. Prendergast
Fire Chief	Wade Baltz
Street Foreman	Frank J. Yant
Health Officer	H. L. Carroll

COMMISSIONERS OF SEWICKLEY WATER WORKS

A. J. Dawson, President

James Clarke
B. E. Rhodes
D. M. Gray
Roy Rose

BOARD OF HEALTH

W. F. Holthaus, President

Harold S. Irons[3]
E. W. Myers
D. S. Irvine
George E. Riegel, M.D.
H. A. McMaster, Jr.[4]

PLANNING COMMISSION

Harry S. Hull, Jr., Chairman

W. Henry Beighlea
Carl E. Wahl
D. Herbert Trader
J. G. Williams

PARKING AUTHORITY

Robert Angros, Chairman

W. W. Collin
Wm. S. Tallman
W. C. Gourley
Martin W. Wise

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

J. E. O'Leary, Chairman

T. W. Neely, Secretary
Ralph C. Wright

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

James A. Purdie
L. H. Shadduck
J. G. Williams

[1]Resigned March 19, 1956
[2]Appointed March 19, 1956
[3]Deceased July 19, 1956
[4]Appointed September 17, 1956

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