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**Municipal Research,
Bureau of**

1913

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH**TRUSTEES**

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Copy of letter sent Wednesday morning by hand to Secretary of the Board of Estimate for the full board Thursday, February 6th - individual copies by mail to each member

DIRECTORS

WILLIAM H. ALLEN
 HENRY BRUERE
 FREDERICK A. CLEVELAND

261 BROADWAY, NEW YORK February 5, 1913.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
 Mayor,
 City of New York.

S i r:

Between now and November 1913 there will probably be in New York City more discussion of municipal departments and municipal efficiency than during any preceding year. It seems to us that in direct proportion as such public discussion centers upon evidence of advances already made by the city and upon evidence of betterments planned or remaining to be undertaken will it enlighten and permanently benefit the city.

The Bureau of Municipal Research suggests that a municipal efficiency exhibit might help definitize this discussion if held toward the end of May in a place large enough to permit a graphic exposition of efficiency methods installed in city departments by the present administration or efficiency methods applicable to city work but not yet employed, from the points of view of the three following classes of exhibitor:

- 1 - City departments
- 2 - Philanthropic and civic agencies having first hand information regarding city departments
- 3 - Private corporations employing methods of noteworthy efficiency

If such an exhibit were held we believe that there would be a very large attendance of out of town administrative officials, mayors, comptrollers, efficiency experts from all parts of the United States and that they would welcome an invitation from the officials of New York to meet in a convention for discussion of different methods of increasing municipal efficiency.

That the public would be interested has already been shown not only by the enormous attendance at the two budget exhibits of 1910 and 1911 but by the tremendous amount of advertising given to city problems through news items, editorials, descriptive stories, public addresses, etc., due chiefly to these budget exhibits. Special moving pictures, lectures, etc., could easily be provided for a municipal efficiency exhibit this coming spring. We first suggested informally to several members of the board of

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261 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY

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estimate and apportionment that such an exhibit be given by the board of estimate early enough in the year to lay a fact basis for the discussion of the numerous issues which will inevitably be under discussion during the several months prior to the next municipal election. It was informally suggested to us that because of the financial obligation involved in holding an exhibit in a place large enough to accomplish the several purposes proposed and because of the proposal to charge a nominal admission fee to help defray the expense of the exhibit it would be better if the city did not, itself, give the exhibit but accepted the role of one of several exhibitors.

The trustees of the Bureau of Municipal Research have had this subject under consideration at several meetings. We have consulted with numerous commercial users of efficiency devices and manufacturers of devices for increasing efficiency of different city departments. We are convinced that with full cooperation and a sincere desire on all sides to get the facts about municipal efficiency and nothing but the facts before the public in an interesting way it will be possible to have a successful and most beneficial public exhibit.

Our tentative proposal is this:

- 1 - That the Grand Central Palace be engaged for the three weeks period beginning May 20th to June 10th
- 2 - That at least 10,000 square feet of most desirable space be reserved for city departments without charge
- 3 - That in connection with each departmental exhibit commercial houses and civic agencies be asked to exhibit facts, devices, machinery bearing upon that particular department's efficiency
- 4 - That no miscellaneous descriptive matter be accepted which does not bear directly upon recent increases in efficiency or efficiency steps yet to be undertaken
- 5 - That the call for a convention of municipal officials in different parts of the United States to confine discussion to problems of efficiency be issued by New York's municipal officials
- 6 - That all financial liability for the rental of three floors of the Grand Central Palace, for accidents, for advertising, for music, moving picture shows, etc., etc., be borne by the Bureau of Municipal Research
- 7 - That in planning the exhibit, in placing exhibitors, in choosing speakers, etc., the Bureau of Municipal Research will welcome as much assistance as the municipal government will provide

If the exhibit is held in May and in the Grand Central Palace it will be necessary to decide at once. Immediately upon receiving word from the board of estimate that it would like to have such an exhibit organized, the Bureau of Municipal Research will proceed to complete financial arrangements and organize for the effective administration of the plan.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Henry Bruere

Director.

PCW/S
3/6/13

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

OUTLINE OF WORK FOR PROPOSED STAFF
TO HANDLE ALL MATTERS CONCERNING INFORMATION AND COMPLAINT

The object of the proposed organization (Information and Complaint) should be to obtain promptly comprehensive, adequate and reliable information upon any and all matters concerning the city government, especially those matters requiring action by the city's boards and commissions, etc., in order to present facts and recommendations to:

- 1 - Members of the respective boards
- 2 - The petitioning officials
- 3 - The public - individual taxpayers and civic organizations

through the press & other avenues of publicity.
for the purpose of securing proper action and to assist the community to understand intelligently problems and actions taken.

Below will be found an outline of the work to be undertaken by such an organization:

- 1 - To investigate and recommend action to the mayor and any other members of the several boards and commissions concerning any and all matters upon which they must vote in the following boards and commissions:

- a - Board of estimate and apportionment
- b - Sinking fund commission
- c - Board of aldermen
- d - Board of City Record
- e - Board of city depositories
- f - Art commission
- g - Armory board
- h - Permanent census board
- i - Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School
(Ch. 235, L. 1896)
- j - Board of trustees, Bellevue and allied hospitals
- k - Board of health
- l - Board of ambulance service

- 2 - To pay special attention to all matters relating to the preparation and subsequent modification of and supplement-

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for the purpose of securing proper action and to assist the community to understand intelligently problems and actions taken. *through the press & other avenues of publicity.*

Below will be found an outline of the work to be undertaken by such an organization:

- 1 - To investigate and recommend action to the mayor and any other members of the several boards and commissions concerning any and all matters upon which they must vote in the following boards and commissions:

- a - Board of estimate and apportionment
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- j - Board of trustees, Bellevue and allied hospitals
- k - Board of health
- l - Board of ambulance service

- 2 - To pay special attention to all matters relating to the preparation and subsequent modification of and supplement-

tal appropriations for the two annual city budgets,-
tax and corporate stock

3 - To supervise the obtaining of proper information and to be responsible for accuracy and nature of replies to communications received by the Bureau from

- a - Citizens and civic organizations of New York City on general and specific matters
- b - Public officials of New York City on general and specific matters
- c - Citizens and civic organizations of other municipalities on general and specific matters
- d - Officials of other municipalities on general and specific matters

4 - To supervise the investigation of complaints and to be responsible for the nature of the reports and recommendations as a result of such charges and investigations made by

- a - Citizens and civic organizations of New York City
- b - Officials of New York City

5 - To be responsible, largely or wholly, for the contact of this Bureau with the several branches of the city and county government, under the general supervision of the directors

In order to carry on this work a small regular staff would be required, ~~to which additions of special men~~ ^{+ a special staff} for special work should be available on short notice.

Regular Staff

One investigator in charge
One assistant investigator
One secretary or stenographer
One clerk

Special
Temporary Staff

One engineer, investigator
One lawyer, investigator

Further additions to both of these staffs might be required as the work develops.

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OUTLINE OF WORK FOR BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND COMPLAINT

The object of this bureau should be to obtain comprehensive and adequate information as a basis for action by the mayor -

- 1 - In the various boards of which he is a member
- 2 - In dealing with his commissioners
- 3 - In dealing with the public citizens and civic organizations, through the press, reports, etc. -

in order that the mayor's policies and acts may be based upon democratic demands and desires and may be intelligently understood by the community.

Below will be found an outline of the work to be undertaken by such bureau or organization:

- 1 - To investigate and recommend action to the mayor concerning any and all matters upon which he must vote or act by reason of his membership in or legal relation to the following boards and commissions:

	<u>Nature of Relation</u>
a - Board of estimate and apportionment	<i>Chairman</i>
b - Sinking fund commission	"
c - Board of aldermen	Veto power
d - Board of City Record	<i>Chairman</i>
e - Board of city depositories 196	"
f - Art commission	<i>Member</i>
g - Armory board	<i>Chairman</i>
h - Permanent census board	?
i - Brooklyn disciplinary training school	?
h. <i>Mun. Civil Service Commission</i> (Ch. 255, L. 1896)	<i>Veto power.</i>

- 2 - To represent the mayor and keep him informed upon all necessary matters relating to the preparation and subsequent modifications of the tax budget and the corporate stock budget

- 3 - To supervise the securing of, and to be responsible for the accuracy of, information requested by
 - a - Citizens and civic organizations of New York City on general and specific matters
 - b - Citizens and civic organizations of other municipalities on general and specific matters

- c - Officials of New York City on general and specific matters
- d - Officials of other municipalities on general and specific matters

4 - To supervise investigation* of complaints and to be responsible for the nature of the report and the action recommended, as a result of charges made by

- a - Citizens and civic organizations of New York City
- b - Officials of New York City

5 - To act as secretary of conferences with departmental heads at

- a - Cabinet meetings concerning general policies, departmental cooperation, etc.
- b - Special meetings and interviews concerning any phase of regular or special work of a given department or group

6 - To encourage cooperative activity on the part of the subordinate officials and employees of the several departments for the purpose of securing

- a - Accurate information expeditiously
- b - Suggestions for improving departmental procedure and administration. Such suggestions should be initiated by a departmental council to consist of not more than nine members below the grade of deputy commissioner. This council's recommendations should be transmitted to the head of the department and to the mayor's representative in charge of reorganization study and plan. These two officials should investigate and consider such recommendations prior to joint discussion and consideration by them. The joint recommendation of these two officials might be termed the recommendation of the mayor's council (for the department of -----). A full record of each proposal or recommendation should be submitted to the mayor for his consideration and final action

7 - To be the mayor's agent in general relations with the rank and file of departmental employees so that he may be reliably and adequately informed or forewarned concerning:

- a - Effect of departmental policies on the community
- b - Effect of departmental policies on departmental organization, esprit, etc.
- c - Nature and extent of problems allied to or within a department's scope, not yet undertaken.

* To be independent of department involved

8 - To make periodic reports in summary form of salient facts with respect to the several departments, and of the essential elements of departmental problems for the mayor's guidance and information for cabinet meetings or conferences, public statement or final action

9 - To promote and arrange small meetings, conferences with and at times hecklings of a department head by individuals, civic organizations or committees, for frank discussion of vital and practical matters under his jurisdiction, in order that the several departments may be made more responsive to public desire and thereby more democratically efficient

All this work should be undertaken in a comprehensive and constructive manner. The democratization of municipal government and the encouragement of intelligent citizen cooperation through criticism and suggestion will result in benefit for both the official and the citizen. The several departmental heads should constantly be asking publicly and privately, "What does the town want?" and should make a sincere effort to obtain the correct answer and achieve the desired result. This method might most profitably be tried by the police commissioner with respect to the degree of enforcement of the three laws which are most largely responsible for police graft..

The names of several organizations and individuals having the same or similar objects or opinions should be obtained and their coordination and cooperation constantly urged, in order to test and determine by conference, public meetings, etc. the soundness and merit of their views, so that the city administration may know whether they are worthy of serious consideration and adoption.