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# Editors Write About Council-Manager Plan

KINSTON DAILY FREE PRESS  
Kinston

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

Taken as a whole, our experience has been that the City-Manager form is more efficient than part-time service heretofore rendered by the various councilmen and aldermen. Of course the success of the system depends in its final analysis upon the man who is secured to fill the place. Candidly there has been criticism of our man, still I believe the majority of our citizens still think the City-Manager form the best.

Answering your specific questions:

1. Taxes have not been raised since the City-Manager form went into effect.
  2. We've had a number of improvements but it would hardly be proper to say that all of them were attributable to the manager. I think we would have had a good many of them without him.
  3. We still have a local political situation and I doubt whether that will ever be entirely removed.
- The fact that the City-Manager has supervision and administration authority over most of the city departments (I believe the city clerk is an exception), makes it possible to co-ordinate these departments more effectively than under the aldermanic system.
5. The change was made through an amendment to the city charter. We did not resort to Plan D. The amendment gives the City-Manager pretty full powers.
- I believe that the principle of the City-Manager form is sound and, with a capable manager, will produce a more efficient administration of the municipality's affairs.
- Yours sincerely,  
H. GALT BRAXTON.

THE DISPATCH  
Lexington, N. C.

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

Lexington has had a council-manager form of government, provided by amended city charter, for more than 20 years. I have heard no responsible citizen even suggest they would like to see the system changed.

Our particular set-up provides for a mayor, who may be nominated at large, one city commissioner from each of our five wards, and one commissioner chosen at large. All candidates are nominated by petitions signed by some five per cent of the number of votes cast for mayor in the last previous municipal election. As many persons as may desire may file from any ward. There is no primary and the petitions must not specify the political affiliation of the candidate. The entire city votes on all commissioners, as well as mayor. The mayor votes in case of a tie on the commission.

The commission appoints the city manager at will and all departments heads are under him.

Our tax rate has fluctuated during this period, depending on special requirements in any particular year, and, of course, the debt service requirements. The general opinion of informed citizens is that the system has proven economical and efficient, and it has enabled many improvements to be made out of current revenues that might not otherwise have been effected.

Lexington also has a city utilities commission. It owns and operates electric utilities, waterworks and sewer systems. The city manager is also utilities manager. The city commissioners appoint the three members of the utilities commission, who directly operate the utilities. At this time city officials plan to purchase the local gas company and greatly expand it, if an allocation of natural gas from the Transcontinental pipe line is upheld, as expected.

It may be observed that the council-manager system has proven as responsive to public opinion as the old aldermanic system, or perhaps even more so. It has also served to attract on the whole able citizens to the public service. I recall only one real political row since the system was adopted. It was a lulu.

This may not specifically answer all questions in mind, but I believe it reflects the situation here.

Sincerely yours,  
E. E. WITHERSPOON.

THE RALEIGH TIMES  
Raleigh

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

Doubtless you can get the information you want about our experience here with Council-Manager form of government through a booklet being mailed to you from City Hall today. Such action is in line with contacts by me with Mayor James E. Briggs and City Manager W. H. Carper.

My own personal reaction is a definite belief that our present form of government is far superior to those which I have seen: Mayor-Alderman and Mayor-Commission.

Our tax rate in recent years has been reduced while we have been spending more money improving our Police, Fire and Water Departments.

With another election coming up several weeks hence, it is contemplated that there will be plenty of candidates, including some re-runners by incumbent Council members. It is very evident that all

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members of our current administration are right on their toes, with a highly competent City Manager constantly behind them.

Cordially yours,  
JOHN A. PARK.

JOURNAL and SENTINEL  
Winston-Salem

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

Thank you for your letter asking for an opinion of the City Manager-aldermanic form of government in Winston-Salem. It's good to know that Southern Pines is going to vote on it. I hope it carries. It has certainly benefited Winston-Salem.

1. Since the City Manager form of government was voted in and went into effect July, 1948, the City tax rate has not been raised. Despite that, the City has expanded its services and has gone into new projects on a scale which has been unprecedented in a like period of time. Besides that, we have reduced the total indebtedness of our City substantially, debts which had been accumulated under previous forms of municipal government. For many years, Winston-Salem HAD refunded its debt rather than pay it off. But since the war, we have paid it off regularly—and we have built up a rather sizeable surplus in the City treasury. I do believe that we are getting more for our tax dollars than we did before the City Manager form was instituted.

2. We have been able to put through needed improvements. One of the very first programs after 1948 was laying a new pipeline to the Yadkin River, about 12 miles from Winston-Salem, to give the City a more permanent water supply. This line cost the City \$4,000,000—voted in a bond issue—but, as indicated above, without an increase in the tax rate. Maintenance of streets and construction and paving of new streets has been much better handled since we hired a City Manager. We have enlarged our City Hospital, and are engaged now in construction of an East-West superhighway to traverse the City. Services, such as garbage collection, water and sewer service, all have been improved markedly.

3. Politics is a lively game in Winston-Salem, and it is unlikely that rows will be eliminated in the foreseeable future. However, it can safely be declared that the good performance of our two City Managers we have had thus far has eliminated many of the issues that once were splendid issues for candidates for mayor and the board of aldermen. For example, where once a candidate was able to shoot political holes in the incumbents in office, under them loose commission form of government, today the situation is changed.

The city manager government has proved its worth here so thoroughly that it is difficult to find any fault with the normal (administrative) operations of the government. The politicians confine themselves to the areas outside of administration.

4. The city's purchasing, the public works performed, the detailed administration and the handling of personnel—all have improved in efficiency. We have installed a merit system—a pay and classification plan for city employees—which has worked very well. It is much fairer than the old system when employees could curry favor with an alderman or two, and get a promotion or a raise.

5. At first Winston-Salem amended its town charter, but two years later the General Assembly was petitioned to change it so that now we operate under Plan D. The change was made in order to give more power to the City Manager, and make his administration more effective over the people responsible to him.

Sincerely yours,

PETE IVEY.

THE CHAPEL HILL WEEKLY  
Chapel Hill, N. C.

(Mr. Graves' letter, printed below, was written in haste as he waited to catch a plane. Ed.)

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

We have had a town manager form of government for many years here. I am heartily in favor of it and I am sure the public sentiment here supports it. A lot depends, of course, on getting a capable manager, but that problem is common to all undertakings.

Taxes have remained about the same here for a long time as far as the rate is concerned. The tax revenue has gone up as a result of periodic re-assessments or because of values created by new construction.

LOUIS GRAVES.

THE MONROE JOURNAL  
Monroe, N. C.

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

I cannot answer your list of questions in detail as some of them have no application here. Our people never discussed the managerial system, etc. We came into it gradually, by experiment.

Back in the days when, or even before, everybody else was broke, our town was broke. It became necessary to do something. A number of people centered on the three best men we could find and ran them for aldermen. Their job was to get the town out of the hole as best they could. They got a manager, called him a secretary, and began. In this way one man became responsible and began to manage things as a business. We have not fallen away from that method. We have a mayor and three aldermen. They employ a manager and he runs things.

I doubt if there is now a better managed town of any size in the United States than Monroe. My observation runs over fifty years from the loose, disjointed ward system to the present. Nobody says anything about managerial or non-managerial. And nobody can now get up kick enough to run for office on a platform of change. We have no business giants who have brought about the change, just the common sense of mediocre men. Our town is quite a business now, owns its public utilities, which are extensive, and makes money on them, has all its streets paved, has had no increase in taxes. Perhaps I should say that all this good situation does not necessarily arise from the managerial system. It is due to lack of factions, political and otherwise, and such things as disturb many communities. Few people here ever give a thought about city government. It runs so smoothly and efficiently and so unmistakably honestly, that fusses hardly ever arise. The old aldermanic system gave us a crop of peanut politicians running for office at every election. It is now difficult to get any able man to bother with it—I mean to run for alderman. They see no need to.

R. F. BEASLEY.

P.S. The principle is sound. Changes are often opposed because we attach too many big names to them.

THE DAILY REFLECTOR  
Greenville

Dear Mrs. Boyd:

I am not sure just how much actual information I can give you. We have approved the plan in our city, but as yet it has not actually gone into effect.

On January 12 last, the voters of Greenville approved Plan D by an overwhelming majority of almost two to one. I feel, along with many other citizens, that it is by far the better form of municipal government. However, the only tangible result I have been able to note so far is in the calibre of men who are seeking places on the new council.

The filing period for our election closes Saturday, and through yesterday we had a rather large number of men of fine business quality who had filed for council posts.

It seems that government is put on a more business basis and less petty politics basis under the council-manager form. I am quite confident it will produce more efficiency in municipal government than we have had before.

We have Plan D in its purest form—straight from the statute book. There were several alterations proposed, but local officials decided to try the pure form for two years and then make alterations where they would better suit the needs of the city.

I'm sorry I cannot give you more definite information on the council-manager operations, but I do feel that Greenville took a very progressive step when it adopted the plan. I am quite sure the vast majority of the people still favor it, and I believe after the plan goes into operation it will gain more and more supporters.

Yours very truly,  
DAVID J. WHICHARD.

### GRAINS OF SAND

The springtime sun and showers which have blessed our Sandhills lately have encouraged some cottonwood logs piled up on South Bennett street to put out new green leaves, despite the fact that they are not in contact with the ground at either end.

The cottonwood trees, then dying from frequent trimmings under the telephone wires, were cut by the Town before Christmas. Sawed into five and six foot lengths, they were left piled up in front of the home of Mrs. Tom Vann, with her permission—she thought she might be able to use them for firewood, though as it happened, she never did.

Now comes this amazing sign of the power of spring, which has convinced the logs they are still trees though they have been chopped down for three months.

W. P. Phillips, of Raeford, brother of Mrs. Vann, visiting her home the other day, said that never in all his years as a vocational agriculture teacher has he ever seen such a thing before.

Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Andrews of Manly celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary Easter Sunday—and along with it, for Mrs. Andrews, the 28th anniversary of a most remarkable record.

Never in all those years has Mrs. Andrews been sick enough to spend even one day in bed.

This is a wonderful record of health—also, we feel sure, of the kind of temperament which puts minor aches and ills cheerfully, but firmly, in their place. Instead of letting them boss her, as many women do, she shows them who's boss.

We wish many happy anniversaries to Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, with many more years of health and good cheer.

Rita Hayworth and her new picture "Salome" must have a public relations agent who is tops. Listening to the radio the other night, we heard them mentioned on every single show for two or three hours, no matter how irrelevant the y were to the subject matter of the show.

And in the New Yorker this week, there's quite a story on an archaeologist who helped with historical details, and two young ladies sipping as Salome for publicity reasons.

Here we are, too, keeping the ball rolling. Honest, nobody has said us a thing.

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