

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD.

Duties of Auditors and Other Officials as to Municipal Accounts.

The report of the provincial municipal auditor for 1902 contains numerous suggestions and recommendations which municipal auditors and other officials throughout the province would do well to bear in mind and comply with. Mr. John McEachren in his report of his examination of the financial affairs of the township of Sunnidale makes the following recommendations:

1. That your treasurer use the authorized Government cash book. This has not been done, although the Statutes provide a penalty for not using same.

3. That your treasurer keep a bills payable book, in which a proper record be kept of all monies borrowed.

3. That your treasurer keep a debenture book, showing a proper record of all debentures issued.

4. That your treasurer keep a bank account, in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes.

5. That all by-laws passed be kept in a regular by-law book, to be kept for that purpose, and that each by-law be signed by the clerk and reeve and the township seal affixed to same.

I find a number of the by-laws passed by your council have not been signed by the reeve.

6. That all reports of committees be incorporated in the minutes of your council, or be copied in a book kept for that purpose.

7. That all awards made by drainage engineer, fence viewers, etc., etc., be copied by your clerk in a book to be kept for that purpose, so that your auditors can check same to see that amounts have been paid or included in the next collector's roll.

8. That the clerk forward the additions on each page of the collector's roll, so that the totals on last page would show the amount raised on each levy.

9. That no change be made in the collector roll by the clerk after it had been handed to the collector, unless authorized by resolution of council, of which notice in writing shall be given to the collector and treasurer.

10. That a summary of your collector's roll be published in your auditor's report each year, so that the ratepayers could see the amount raised on each particular levy.

11. That the collector on returning the roll must verify by affidavit the amount of uncollected taxes, etc., as the Statute requires.

I find in some cases that this has not been done by the collector.

12. That the proper return of the collector to the Treasurer should be made on or before the 14th December, but the time for doing this may be extended in the proper manner by the council to any subsequent day not later than the 1st day of February following.

14. That all orders for work done be endorsed or receipted by the party or parties actually entitled to payment for same.

This is the only voucher your auditors should accept. I find a great many of the orders issued are endorsed by your Clerk, Reeve, and in some cases by a Councillor, and no receipt is produced from the party entitled to payment.

15. That where accounts or claims for work done on town lines are presented to your council, that you only pay your proportion of same, leaving the contractor to collect the balance from the township interested.

I find in a number of cases, where your Council has paid the whole account, it has been impossible to collect from the other municipality.

16. Where it is necessary to make a charge or claim against another municipality, your Clerk should notify your Treasurer in writing, giving particulars and amounts, so that the Treasurer can make the proper charge in his books.

It is then the duty of the Treasurer to see that the amounts are collected. The same written notice should be given the Treasurer when charges are made against individuals for rent of hall, use of road machinery, pile driver, etc.

17. In connection with Division Court fees due your township, I find one or two municipalities have never paid their share of these fees.

In future, unless the fees are paid promptly each year, action should be taken at once, as it is much more difficult to collect when allowed to stand for years.

18. That school sections be credited with the amount actually collected; not the amount asked for by trustees' requisitions, as you have been in the habit of doing.

There is usually a difference between the amount asked for and the amount raised, owing to the manner in which the rate is struck at a certain fraction, or by a part of the taxes being uncollectable.

This would apply to any special levy on a certain portion of the municipality.

19. That a strict account be kept of road scrapers, road machinery, or other material bought for the township, as they are just as much an asset as the taxes, and some system should be adopted for keeping them, so that they will be available when required.

The following statement will show the amount paid for scrapers in the course of a few years:

1887, 6 scrapers	\$ 55 50
1888, 6 scrapers	54 50
1891, 5 scrapers	44 50
1892, 1 scraper	8 5
1893, 6 scrapers	38 10
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	\$201 10

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I would suggest that a receipt be taken from each path-master, covering the scrapers and other township property in his possession, and that he be held responsible for same until handed over to his successor.

20. That a fire-proof safe be purchased and placed in hall, so that the rolls, by-laws, and other books and papers can be preserved with a reasonable degree of safety.

The following important duties should be performed by your auditors, and your Council should see that they are carried out:

(1) Compare assessment rolls with Collector's rolls to see that assessed values on which rates are levied are correctly entered.

(2) Compare school section entries with school section map, and check valuations on which school rates have been levied.

(3) Check all entries and additions on the rolls.

(4) Verify the correctness of all the rates and taxes levied by by-laws, proceedings of Council, Engineer's drainage, awards and certificates, statute labor lists, fence viewers' awards, County Treasurers' accounts, School Trustees' requisitions, or other authority.

(5) The Collector's accounts with the Treasurer should be examined, and also settlement of roll, which should be verified under oath, and in accordance with sections 147 and 148 of the Assessment Act.

(6) Every stub of the Treasurer's receipt book, and every voucher, document or roll audited should be properly stamped, as required by the Act of 1898.

(7) The Treasurer's vouchers should be carefully examined, to see that each payment was authorized by proper authority, and that proper receipt is attached.

(8) The Auditors should refer to the condition of the Treasurer's security, and also to the insurance on corporation property.

(9) The Auditors should show what cash balance, if any, is due from the Treasurer to the municipality, and where such balance is deposited; if no bank account is kept, they should count the cash to see that it is correct.

(10) If any source of revenue has ceased to exist, or if last payment has been made on any special assessment, the Auditors should make a report to that effect.

(11) It is very important that the Auditors should make themselves familiar with the by-laws of the municipality, and it is incumbent on them to make a special report on any payment made contrary to law.

Mr. F. H. Macpherson, in his report of the inspection examination, and audit of the accounts of the township of Sandwich East, recommends as follows:

1. That the clerk prepare a separate school supporters' index book, as required by the Separate Schools Act.

2. That the clerk be required to carefully keep on file the following returns or copies thereof:

- List of all lands liable to be sold.
- Assessor's occupied return.
- Return of taxes on occupied lands.

3. That the clerk shall copy all by-laws of the township in the by-law book promptly, and carefully file and preserve the originals.

4. That all records of courts of revision of the assessment roll and of appeals against drainage assessment be kept in a book provided for that purpose, and decisions given in all appeals to the judge to be noted thereon.

6. That the by-laws striking the rates shall show in detail the sums to be levied on account of the township's contribution under the several drainage by-laws.

6. That special collectors' roll be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Assessment Act, a suitable form for which is supplied herewith.

7. That the clerk be required to have the collector's roll ready by the time specified by statute, and that the roll shall be completed in every respect (and properly certified), and with warrant attached previous to its being handed to the collector.

8. That the clerk procure a book ruled as per the form supplied with this report, entering therein all assessments on account of the drains already in force; all assessments on drainage works under by-laws hereafter passed to be entered promptly upon the final passing of each by-law.

9. That original by-laws shall not be filled or pasted in the by-law book, but shall be carefully filed away in the tin boxes recommended to be purchased.

10. That a proper index of all by-laws be prepared, under number and title.

11. That the attention of the township assessors be called to the omissions and errors in former assessors' rolls, as pointed out in this report, with instructions hereafter to conform closely to the requirements of the Assessment Act.

12. That the assessor shall include in his roll all property in the township, that entitled to exemption being so marked, and that a complete list of exempted properties, valued as they would be if subjected to assessment, be entered at the back of the roll for assessment purposes.

13. That changes in drainage assessments be made only upon the certificate of the township engineer.

14. That the council shall comply with the provisions of the Assessment Act, which contemplates the appointment of a collector in time to commence his duties by October 1st each year.

(Continued on page 104.)