Arlington Adopts the County Manager Form of Government

By: Robert Nelson Anderson

In the summer of 1930 Arlington County had a population of approximately 26,000 inhabitants (compared to a current population of 170,000). It was then as it is now a county of homes although it had some business and industry. It contained no incorporated towns except a small part of Falls Church, a suburban town lying principally in Fairfax County. More than half of its population had moved in since the out break of World War I. Ever since that cataclysmic event a steady stream of new citizens has poured across the Potomac attracted by the open country and the natural beauty of the rolling hills. These people, from every state of the Union, brought with them varying experiences in local government and the resulting amalgamation produced an activity in politics and public affairs unsurpassed elsewhere in the Nation. Government employees forbidden by civil service rules to take part in partisan politics found an outlet for their pent up civic energies in citizens associations and clubs. At this period of its history the County was not without its accomplishments. It boasted of a school system which had stood first in the state ratings for some years, in a model health and welfare unit, excellent fire and police protection, an up-to-date high pressure water system, the lowest illiteracy figures and highest per capita wealth in the State[1]. These accomplishments, however, had been achieved in spite of rather than because of the county's system of government.

The government of Arlington County in the summer of 1930 and for years prior thereto rested in the hands of a Board of Supervisors of three members which combined legislative and executive functions. This Board had under its absolute control and exclusive jurisdiction all matters in connection with roads, sidewalks, sewers, water, health, sanitation, welfare, fire protection, zoning, planning--in fact, almost everything touching the daily life of the citizen except schools. This Board had long been a storm center and the subject of severe criticism and debate[2].

[1] Hon. Hugh Reid in the *Virginia Municipal Review* of March 1931, Vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 28.

[2] This criticism was because of the governmental system and not the personalities involved. In the summer of 1930 the Board of Supervisors consisted of B. M. Hedrick, representing Arlington District (17,844 pop.); Ed. C. Duncan, representing Jefferson District (3,104 pop.); and E. C. Turnburke, representing Washington District (5,666 pop.). The first was a lawyer, the second a retired railroad engineer, and the third a painter.

As early as 1922 certain demands arose for the incorporation of Arlington as a city of the first class but these demands never gained much headway[3]. However, they probably served a useful purpose in that they must have caused a few of the then leaders of the County, foremost among whom was Hon. Charles T. Jesse, Arlington's Delegate in the House of Delegates at the 1920, 1924 and 1926 sessions, to become familiar with the advantages derived by cities from the city manager plan and no doubt laid the seed which resulted in the later adoption of the County's present form of government.

The lack of a single chief executive comparable to the officials found in the national government, the several states, and most cities was regarded by some students of local government during this period as perhaps the most serious weakness in county organization[4]. The newly evolved county-manager plan, patterned after the manager form of government then employed in American cities remedied this defect by its two essential features: (1) a relative small county board serving as the law-making and policy-determining body of the county, and (2) an appointive manager as the principal administrative officer[5].

As the advantages of the County Manager Plan gradually

[3] Actually an Act to provide for the incorporation of Arlington County was introduced in the Senate by Senator Frank L. Ball March 28th, 1927 and passed that body on April 1, 1927 (Senate Journal, Special Session, 1927, pp. 64, 114) and on February 29, 1928 Delegate Hugh Reid introduced a similar bill in the House (House Journal, 1928, pp. 633, 865) but neither of these bills became law. However, on February 14, 1930 Delegate Reid introduced a bill (H. B. 207) to provide a method for incorporating Arlington County into a city of the first class, to prescribe a form of government for such city and to provide for organization thereunder (House Journal, 1930, p. 321). This bill passed the House February 19, 1930, (House Journal, 1930, p. 412) and the Senate on March 7, 1930 with amendments by Senator Ball (Senate Journal, 1930, pp. 748, 749; House Journal, 1930, p. 816). The next day the Senate amendments were agreed to by the House (House Journal, 1930, p. 822) and the bill became law on March 20, 1930, to be effective for a period of three years.

[4] Clyde F. Snider, *Local Government in Rural America*, pp. 172-180 (1957).

[5] In 1930 the City Manager plan was in use in 27 cities of Virginia (it having been first adopted by Staunton twenty years previous) and also 400 cities throughout the Nation.

became known to a few County leaders such as Delegate Jesse it was realized more and more that the form of government originally prescribed by the Virginia Constitution of 1902 was not meeting the needs of those counties where city conditions were fast coming to exist, and even in other counties it was felt by some people that discretion should be given the General Assembly to authorize optional forms. But the Constitution of 1902, in its original form, rigidly set up a scheme of county organization and government, and the General Assembly was powerless to comply with the demands of certain leaders of Arlington for a grant of an improved system. Accordingly, an amendment of Section 110 of Article VII of the Constitution dealing with "Organization and Government of Counties" seemed to present the only real possibility of relief[6]. Foremost in bringing about such an amendment were Arlington's representatives in the General Assembly, namely, Hon. Frank L. Ball who began his first term in the State Senate in 1924 and Delegate Jesse, above referred to. While some of their early efforts to secure an amendment to Section 110 did not materialize, these gentlemen nevertheless had accomplished much in that they had gotten a good many other members of the General Assembly to realize Arlington's situation and to begin showing an interest therein.

In 1926 a general revision of the Virginia Constitution was initiated by the setting up of a Commission authorized by the General Assembly[7] consisting of seven members to be selected and appointed by the Governor which was to study the problem and make recommendations as to what constitutional changes seemed desirable. Having completed its undertaking the Commission on March 17, 1927[8] was invited to address the joint

[6] However, it is interesting to note that on March 24, 1926 an act passed by the General Assembly was approved providing for the election by the Board of Supervisors of Arlington and Alleghany Counties of a County Manager, and providing for an election by the people in such counties to determine whether a county manager shall be employed or not in case the Board of Supervisors fail to comply with the act, by adoption of same by a suitable resolution and the employment of a county manager. Senate Journal, 1926, pp. 249, 624, 859, 881; House Journal, 1926, pp. 338, 998, Acts of Assembly of Va. 1926, p. 485.

[7] S. B. 91; Senate Journal, 1926, pp. 89, 286, 838; House Journal, 1926, p. 995; Act approved March 25, 1926, Acts of Assembly of Va., 1926, p. 797.

[8] House Journal, Special Session, 1927, p. 7.

assembly in special session called by Governor Harry Flood Bryd. The Commission's Report dated February 16, 1927, appearing as Document No. 2, House Journal, Special Session, 1927, p. 8 proposed, among other things, an amendment to Section 110 of the Constitution which would empower the General Assembly to pass general laws authorizing other forms of County organization and government, which forms must be submitted for adoption to popular vote. Both Senator Ball and Delegate Jesse had participated in the preparation of this proposal. Senator Ball at the time was on the Senate Committee on Courts of Justice before which Committee all of the proposed amendments came for hearing.

Thereafter, or on February 24, 1928, Senator Ball and several of his colleagues introduced a bill in the State Senate providing for the submission to the people of the State for ratification or rejection the revisions and/or amendments of the Constitution proposed by the Constitutional Commission including Section 110 above referred to[9]. This bill was passed by the Senate March 3, 1928[10], by the House March 5, 1928[11], (Both Senator Ball and Delegate Hugh Reid[12] voting in the affirmative) and was signed by the Governor on March 14, 1928[13]. On June 19, 1928 the amendment to Section 110 thus submitted to the people of the State was ratified by a majority vote. Thus at long last the Constitutional hurdles were cleared for the adoption of a modern form of government by the people of Arlington County. In his message to the General Assembly on Tuesday, January 31, 1928, Governor Byrd had said: "When permitted by the Constitution no more important duty rests upon Virginia than an efficient constructive reorganization of county governments."

Accordingly, no sooner had the Constitutional amendments been approved by the voters of the State than did the representatives of Arlington in the State Legislature, Senator Ball and Delegate Reid, lay plans to place legislation on the statute books

[9] Senate Journal, 1928, p. 424.

[10] Senate Journal, 1928, p. 585.

[11] House Journal, 1928, p. 762.

[12] Hon. Hugh Reid, now Judge of the County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, succeeded Mr. Jesse as Arlington's representative in the 1928 session of the House. Both he and Senator Ball campaigned in the 1927 election on a platform which included support of a county manager act under the proposed new Constitutional provisions.

[13] Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of Va.,1928, p. 636.

that would enable the voters of Arlington to adopt optional forms of county government.

On February 14, 1930, Delegate Reid introduced H. B. 342 on the House side [14] that would add a new chapter to the Code of Virginia to be designated as Chapter 109-a thereof and fourteen new sections to Code numbered 2772-a to 2773-n relating to the organization and government of counties, and providing for two complete forms of county organization and government, namely, (A) the Modified Commission Form and (B) the County Manager Form either of which was to become effective in any county of Virginia having a population of more than 300 /later amended to 500/ [15] inhabitants to the square mile when submitted to the qualified voters thereof in an election held for that purpose and approved by the majority of those voting thereon, as was authorized by Section 110 of the Constitution, as amended. This Bill was reported by the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns on February 28, 1930; read the third time in the House and passed (yeas 76 - nays 0) on March 3, 1930 [16] . It was then introduced in the Senate on March 4, 1930 and referred to the Committee on County, City and Town Organization; passed the Senate with amendments on March 7, 1930, Mr. Ball offering a substitute bill which was taken up and agreed to (yeas 30 - nays 0) [17] . On March 8, 1930 the House concurred with amendments [18] . At this juncture a message was received by the Senate from the House (by Mr. Reid) who informed the Senate that the House had passed an amendment to the Senate substitute for H. B. No. 342, in which amendment the House requested the concurrence of the Senate. On the same day Mr. Ball moved the Senate to concur in the amendment made by the House, which was agreed to by a vote of yeas 31 - nays 0 [19] . The Bill was signed both by the Speaker of the House, J. Sinclair Brown, and Lt. Gov. James H. Price on the same day, March 18, 1930 [20] , and by the Governor on March 20, 1930 [21] .

[14] House Journal, 1930, p. 322.

[15] This classification, which actually confined the Act to Arlington, had been held to be proper and reasonable by the State Supreme Court of Appeals—*Henrico County* v. *Richmond*, 177 Va. 754; 15 S. E. (2d) 309.

[16] House Journal, 1930, pp. 546, 636.

[17] Senate Journal, 1930, pp. 601, 766; House Journal, 1930, p. 793.

[18] House Journal, 1930, p. 826.

[19] Senate Journal, 1930, p. 794; House Journal, 1930, p. 868.

[20] House Journal, 1930, p. 904; Senate Journal, 1930, p. 866.

[21] Acts of General Assembly of Va., 1930, p. 450.

Constitutional obstacles having been eliminated, an enabling act having been placed upon the statute books, a further problem, seemingly equally as difficult as any of the others, presented itself to those interested in securing a modern and efficient form of government for Arlington County, namely, that of laying the substance of the new Code provisions consisting of fourteen complicated sections in such a readible and understandable form before a busy public as would impel the individual members thereof to take the trouble to study them and then intelligently answer the questions propounded therein. Such questions were:

(1) Shall the County change its form of Government?
For
Against
(Strike out one)

(2) In the event of such change, which form of government shall be adopted?
Modified Commission Plan
or
County Manager Plan
(Strike out one)

(3) In the event of such change, shall the governing board be elected at large or by districts?
At Large
By Districts
(Strike out one)

In addition to the task of enlightening the voters on an involved subject, the matter of meeting possible opposition from the so-called "entrenched" interests at the same time raised its head. The local press also later turned out to be antagonistic.

As is true with respect to so many forward movements in the County, it was the Arlington County Civic Federation that gave the first organized impetus toward bringing about a change in Arlington's archaic system of government. Accepting as a fact that the then present form of government was inadequate to meet the needs of the fast growing community, the Federation on May 6, 1930 adopted a resolution offered by Delegate Arthur Orr directing the Committee on Legislation and Legal Action of which the author of this article was Chairman and of which (including later appointments) Frank G. Campbell, Mrs. Florence E. Cannon, Carleton K. Lewis, Hugh J. McGrath, L. C. McNemar,

William D. Medley[22], Arthur Orr, Mrs. Claude S. Semones, Walter U. Varney, and William C. Hull (ex officio) were members to make a thorough study of the various forms (i.e. both municipal and county) of local government recently permitted by law, and of their suitability to meet the local needs, and, not later than the September, 1930 meeting of the Federation, report its recommendations on the question whether an election should be called for the purpose of effecting a change in the form of local government and which one of the forms of government permitted by law should be submitted to the vote of the people in such election. Authority was granted the Committee to call into conference during its studies such county officials or other persons from the general body of citizens of the county as it shall deem expedient for the purpose of availing itself of the benefit of their counsel and advice in the study of the question.

On June 16, 1930, the Committee on Legislation and Legal Action met and organized for the purpose of carrying out the matters referred to it. Carlton K. Lewis was selected Secretary and the Committee then decided to hold meetings on each alternating Monday evening between that date and September. Three subcommittees were appointed, one to study the legal powers of the present form of government, one to study the present and prospective financial and economic status of the county, and one to study the functioning of the forms of local government possible for Arlington County.

Also on June 16, 1930, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce through its President, Ashton C. Jones offered to cooperate with the Federation's Committee in the study of the change-of-government proposal. This offer was accepted by the Federation at its meeting of July 1, 1930. Messrs Henry C. Morris, Louis C. Carl and W. F. Sunderman were named to represent the Chamber of Commerce. Thereafter, or on July 25, 1930, a special county government committee of the Arlington County Bar Association consisting of Walter U. Varney, Judge Harry R. Thomas, Hugh Reid, Commonwealth's Attorney Lawrence W. Douglas and W. Thomas French voted to form a joint committee with the Civic Federation and Chamber of Commerce Committees for the study of a possible change in county government. The first meeting of the combined committees was held at the home of the author in Lyon Village on July 28, 1930.

Working through the hot August evenings the Joint Committee completed its studies and at the regular meeting of the

[22] Hon. William D. Medley was later named Judge of the Circuit Court.

Civic Federation on Tuesday, September 2nd, the Committee which was sometimes called the "Better Government" Committee submitted a report to that body. This report recommended the establishment of a county manager form of government in Arlington in substitution of the existing Board of Supervisors form, and further that the question of change be put to the electorate at the forth coming regular election in November. Although the "Better Government" Committee had made an exhaustive study of the comparative merits of incorporation as against the two new county forms (Modified Commission and County Manager Forms) made available to Arlington by the recent legislation, the results of this particular study were only incidentally embraced in the report. Since several members of the Federation expressed themselves as unwilling to take part in sponsoring by the Federation of any particular new type of government until the incorporation data was supplied and thoroughly digested by all members of the organization, action on the report of the Committee was continued to an adjourned meeting to be held in the Lyon Park Community House, Tuesday, September 16th at which time the Chairman of the Committee agreed to submit a supplemental report on the matter of incorporation. Objection was also voiced by others to attempting to hold an election in November on the ground that the matter was too vital to be rushed thru and these expressed the fear that haste might result in the defeat of the project.

At the adjourned meeting of the Federation the original and supplemental reports [23] of the "Better Government" Committee were considered and debated with the result that the Federation adopted the report and its recommendations favoring the abolition of the existing form of government and the setting up of the County Manager Form, with election of the County Board at large. The Federation authorized the Committee to circulate the necessary petition calling for the election [24] and instructed it to organize for a campaign looking forward to the dissemination of information to the voters relative to its proposals.

[23] The supplemental report pointed out that while Arlington needed a government having all the powers of a city of the first class, such as would be obtained by incorporation, incorporation at that time would be inadvisable principally because it would result in the loss of the County's substantial share of the gasoline tax and valuable state road construction and maintenance.

[24] Under the law the petition calling for the election had to contain the signatures of 200 qualified voters.

Desirous for psychological reasons of getting as many signatures as possible to the petition calling for an election the "Better Government" Committee planned a contest among the communities to determine which could line up the largest number of signers. Local Chairmen were designated for each of the communities and they in turn were authorized to select their own committees. The local chairmen were asked to periodically report progress to a sub-committee consisting of Hugh J. McGrath, William D. Medley, Mrs. Florence E. Cannon, and Arthur Orr in order that the public might be kept advised of the progress being made. The contest was to continue until September 30th, the petitions to be presented to Judge Walter T. McCarthy of the Circuit Court on October 1st. By September 30th signatures of 1027 voters had been obtained. Maintaining an early lead Lyon Park under the Chairmanship of C. K. Lewis had a final total of 198. Second on the list, the Virginia Highlands precinct under the leadership of Mrs. Claude S. Semones reported 110 signers while East Falls Church lead by Harry A. Fellows came third with 101 signers. As planned the petition was presented to Judge McCarthy on October 1st and a court order was entered designating Tuesday, November 4th as the day for the holding of an election on the question of a change in the form of county government.

Now that the date for the election had been fixed the "Better Government" Committee set in motion the wheels of a county-wide organization which had already been formed for the purpose of carrying on one of the most intensive campaigns ever waged in the County. While up to this time no opposition to the election had been openly voiced, and even the members of the existing Board of Supervisors had refused to make any statement, the Committee was well aware of the fact that it would be necessary to carefully present their case to the voters of the County if the proposal they advocated was to be adopted. At this time the Chairman of the "Better Government" Committee advised all organizations in the County that upon request the Committee would supply speakers at meetings to explain all phases of the question, and the Committee's reasons for recommending the County Manager plan. Campaign workers were urged to make note of and report to headquarters any objections to the proposal to change the form of government and of any question in the minds of individual voters. In this manner, the campaign committee could proceed with the maxim of effectiveness.

The first intimation that organized opposition might develop to the change proposals occurred with the press announcement

on October 4th of the formation of a county-wide organization to be known as the "Voters' Service Club of Arlington County". The only information given out with respect to this organization whose creation and existence was shrouded in secrecy, was that Robert H. Forman, Zoning Administrative officer of the County had been named executive secretary. Next, on October 17, the local county weekly newspaper, The Chronicle, carried headlines "Dangerous Plan to Fasten on the County" and also a half page editorial setting up alleged reasons as to why the proposal to change the County's form of government should be rejected. On October 23rd, what up to then was a more or less whispering campaign by the Voters' Service Club broke out into the open with a declaration on the front page of the Washington Sunday Star by Mr. Forman to the effect that he could not go on record as favoring the County Manager plan and also giving his asserted reasons therefor. In this opposition he was joined by Captain Crandall Mackey, attorney and editor of the Chronicle, attorney Clarence R. Ahalt, and Col. J. C. Pepper of Barcroft.

With the opponents of the plan now becoming as outspoken as those advocating it, it became obvious that a whirlwind fight on the proposed change would be staged during the remaining few days leading up to the day of the election [25]. Barrages from the Chronicle and the Voters' Service Club (through Mr. Forman and Mrs. Mary Morris Lockwood, executive secretary of its Women's Division) continued. On the other hand, the "Better Government" Committee, to meet this opposition, resolved to undertake the huge task of issuing and placing in the home of every voter in the County by Saturday, October 25th a pamphlet containing full and complete information on the question of a change in the form of government, such information having been gathered by the "Better Government" Committee. Distribution of the pamphlet consisting of 16 printed pages to 6000 homes was accomplished through the same local committees which circulated the petitions calling for the election. First expected to be paid for by individual $1.00 subscriptions of interested voters, enough advertising space was sold to pay the pamphlets' costs of publication and the individual gifts were returned to the donors.

On October 28th, Delegate Hugh Reid who refrained from taking part in the campaign up to that date endorsed the County

[25] In an article of this length it is obviously impossible to set forth the arguments pro and con of the "Better Government" Committee proposals or the merits or evils of the various forms of local government available to the voter.

Better Government

Arlington County, Virginia, October 23, 1930

Shall the County Change Its Form of Government

AT the Regular Election on November 4, the voters of Arlington County will vote on the question of a change in the form of county government.

The form of the Ballot and the three questions which will appear thereon are displayed in the adjoining column.

On the following pages, all the details of the proposed new form of county government, and the advantages of the proposed change are fully set forth.

The recommendations of the committees of the Civic Federation, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Bar Association that the County Manager form, with a Board of five members to be elected at large, be adopted are included.

CIRCULATION

The total circulation of "Better Government" is 6,000 copies. One copy is to be personally delivered to the home of each voter in Arlington County.

SAMPLE BALLOT

The act under which the election is being called requires that special ballots be prepared with the following questions printed thereon:

Question 1:

Shall the county change its present form of government?

For

Against

(Strike out one)

Question 2:

In the event of such change, which form of government shall be adopted?

Modified Commission Plan

County Manager Plan

(Strike out one)

Question 3:

In the event of such change shall the governing board be elected at large or by districts?

At Large

By Districts

(Strike out one)

First Page of 16 page pamphlet 6000 copies of which were distributed to voters of Arlington County October 23, 1930

(Reduced from Original size)

BETTER GOVERNMENT

Published by The Arlington County Civic Federation

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1930

AN ANSWER TO THE CHRONICLE

Answering a wholesale denunciation of the proposed change in the form of county government in yesterday's issue of the Chronicle, of which Crandal Mackey is the president and editor, Robert N. Anderson, chairman of the Civic Federation Committee, in charge of the campaign for the adoption of the county manager plan of government, characterized every statement in the article as

"The present Board of Supervisors, under a general statute, is given all the powers of a City Council. Some students of the law have contended that the present Board could, under that statute, levy license taxes of the kind mentioned by the Chronicle. Others have grave doubts on the point. The County Manager Act confers upon the governing board in the same language the above-mentioned powers of city councils, so that the taxing powers of the Board under the new form of government will be precisely what they are under the present form.

"The Chronicle's statement that the plan 'means one-man rule without restraint or control' is entirely at variance with the facts. The county manager will have no voice whatever in the determination of county policies except to the extent the Board may ask him for his advice. He cannot, for example, say that a certain road shall or shall not be improved. After the Board has decided that a certain road shall be improved, or that any other public work shall be constructed, the county man-

"The Chronicle's misstatement of the law and the facts pertaining to the important question to be voted on next Tuesday is deplorable. The county manager plan is patterned after the city manager plan, which is not new and untried. Twenty-seven cities of the Commonwealth and 400 cities throughout the United States are now operating under the City Manager Plan. It originated in Staunton, Virginia."

VOTERS! ATTENTION!

Tuesday Is the Day; Don't Fail to Vote

VOTE IN THE MORNING; BEFORE WORK

Polls Close at 5:04 p.m.

Form itself cannot guarantee good government but makes it possible, while poor form makes it impossible.

9

Handbill published by Arlington County Civic Federation Nov. 1, 1930 and distributed to voters

(Reduced from Original size)

* * * * *

ARLINGTON VOTES FOR MANAGER RULE IN COUNTY OFFICES

Approves Change in Form of Government, but Two Precincts Registering No.

ARLINGTON GOVERNMENT VOTE

Precincts.	For Change. Yes.	For Change. No.	What Change. Commission.	What Change. County Manager.	At Large. Yes.	At Large. No.
Arlington	196	208	35	182	152	218
Ballston	174	176	82	153	143	149
Clarendon No. 1	196	94	41	185	176	82
Clarendon No. 2	324	67	45	294	275	88
Carne	132	70	29	137	115	69
Cherrydale	223	126	69	206	136	187
East Falls Church	98	46	33	92	85	55
Glen Carlyn	49	22	15	42	42	22
Lyon Park	295	40	15	293	266	55
Rosslyn	229	60	30	217	199	74
Virginia Highlands	151	122	34	135	101	150
Totals	2.067	1.031	428	1.936	1.689	1.149

The Evening Star Article of November 5, 1930

(Reduced from Original size)

Manager form at a meeting of the Thrifton Improvement League and likewise Senator Frank Ball on October 31st, in a radio broadcast over Station W. J. S. V. urged the adoption of the change proposal. On the program with Senator Ball were Wallace Laurence, City Manager of Alexandria; Fletcher Kemp, Superintendent of Arlington Schools; Harry A. Fellows, former Mayor of Falls Church, the author, and others. On November 2nd, Sheriff Howard B. Fields in a prepared statement to the press joined the opposition, while on the next day Commissioner of Revenue Harry K. Green made a last-minute statement in favor of the Manager plan.

And thus election day finally dawned. Over a period of several months the "Better Government" Committee (later assisted by precinct workers) had labored unceasingly to the end that every voter in the County should have complete information on the subject as a basis for an intelligent vote. It was felt that every question which had arisen in the public discussion had been fully answered, and every objection to the change which had been raised by the opposition had been shown to be without foundation. Also, it should be noted that the outcome of the Committee's effort, which, if successful, would result in the first adoption by an electorate of the County Manager form of government in the United States was being viewed with statewide and even national interest.

With the tumult of the campaign having died down it now only remained for the voters in the silence of the voting booth to exercise their choice. This they did magnificiently!! Recording an almost two to one sentiment at the polls (2067 for - 1031 against) for a change in the structure of their government from the existing administration of a Board of Supervisors, the voters expressed an overwhelming preference for the County Manager plan over the Modified Commission form by a vote of 1908 to 485. At the same time the electorate determined by a vote of 1659 to 1179 that under its County Manager plan it will choose the members of its new County Board, five in number, from the County at large rather than the existing magistrate districts. In only two of then eleven precincts were adverse majorities registered against change in the County's form of government and these by very narrow margins. In the Arlington precinct a vote of 208 to 196 was cast against a change while in Ballston precinct a vote of 176 to 174 was polled against a new form. The varying vote on the several questions presented showed that the people had decided views on the problem presented and a capacity for discrimination.

ARLINGTON COUNTY

Better Government League

What It Is and Why Created

This League is composed of a group of citizens having for their object uniformity of action upon the part of those voters of Arlington County who wish to insure the election to the new County Board of high caliber men, irrespective of party lines or personal friendships.

The League proposes to devote its activities entirely to the selection and election of members of the County Board and will not, as an organization, concern itself with candidates for other offices.

The necessity for an organization of this sort arises from the fact that under our system of Government anyone may become a candidate for these local offices by merely announcing his or her intention of doing so. Past experience has shown that the result is that there are usually so many candidates for each office that the vote is so split up that no candidate has a majority of the total votes cast and in many instances the affairs of the County are conducted by individuals who have received considerably less than a majority of the votes cast and who consequently do not represent a majority of the people of Arlington County.

It appears that the foregoing situation is likely to be particularly aggravated in the coming County election and that we may see as many as forty-five candidates in the field for election to the new County Board, of whom only five can be elected.

Such a condition brings about much confusion in the public mind with respect to the merits of the various candidates, with the result that A goes to the polls and by his vote nullifies the vote of his neighbor B, when, as a matter of fact, A and B both want exactly the same thing, namely, clean and efficient administration of County affairs.

It is desired to emphasize the fact that the League does not set itself up as a monitor to direct voters how to vote. The League is not, primarily, concerned with selecting a slate of candidates. Its primary concern is to insure that the members of the League will pull together on Election Day to elect the candidates that they agree to support so that neighbor A will not nullify the vote of neighbor B.

The League has no intention of urging anyone to enter the field and if persons of outstanding qualifications are nominated by either the Republican or Democratic parties, the League will be as ready to support such nominees as anyone else; the only test from the standpoint of the League being the degree to which a candidate measures up to the following qualifications which have been agreed upon by the League as being essential.

QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates for the County Board must be:

1. Of unquestionable integrity.
2. Must be one who will be unfailingly courteous in his dealings with the public.
3. Should be one who has made or is making a success of his own life work.
4. Should be one having such a grasp of business affairs and financial matters as to be able to understand and analyze the County's financial problems and contracts of various kinds.
5. Should be one who will deal justly with all sections of the County and all factions of the people.
6. Should be progressive; of broad vision, and have a full appreciation of the County's future possibilities.
7. Should be of a mind to yield the maximum of cooperation with the authorities of adjacent jurisdictions and with the representatives of the Federal Government in the development of the Metropolitan area, subject to a realization of the limitations of the County's resources.
8. All other things being equal educational qualifications should be given weight in the selection of candidates.
9. Should be one who will see that the tax payers receive full value for their money and one who will resist the creation of unnecessary offices and expenditures.
10. Should be one who will subordinate personal interests to the best interest of the County as a whole.

The League intends to carefully investigate the qualifications and records of the candidates and will, well prior to the election, advise its membership of the conclusions reached as to which of the candidates is best fitted for the office sought. You will have an opportunity, through your local precinct committee, to aid in such selection. Membership in the League does not bind you to follow the League's suggestions, but cooperation with the League will help you to select the best men when you go to the polls on Election Day.

At the present time the League is composed of seven representatives from each of the eleven voting precincts. The names of the representatives will be found appended hereto. It is idle to rail at conditions for four years and then go to the polls on Election Day and vote into office men who have neither the inclination nor the qualifications to cure the conditions complained of. The men who will be elected to the County Board in November will direct the affairs of your community for the next four years. You are needed to aid in selecting and electing men of the right type. You can do this by getting in touch with the local committee in your precinct and letting them know that the purposes of the League meet your approval and that you desire to cooperate in this movement.

ROBERT N. ANDERSON, President,
Lyon Village, Clarendon, Va.
MRS. T. E. GILBERT, Secretary,
Box 101, Rosslyn, Virginia.

Present Membership of the Better Government League

Walter K. Handy	Mrs. Ada H. Davidson	Henry Thomas	George Yeatman
Harry A. Dye	Charles R. Fenwick	A. J. Porter	C. K. Lewis
C. P. Heins	Richard C. Moncure	W. F. Sunderman	Herbert S. Ward
Rev. Walter Wolf	Mrs. Harry E. Moran	Mrs. N. Rex Hunt	Mrs. Bertha Kelly
Tom Crack	Frank Eastwood	Geo. McCrillis	R. H. Brown
Grover E. Payne	Munson H. Lane	L. C. Buchanan	F. O. Lake
H. A. Finnell	Samuel Breidenbach	Mrs. Joseph Haley	Frank P. Scott
Maj. E. R. Cushing	R. V. Hannah	R. N. Anderson	Frank G. Campbell
Mrs. A. F. Williams	H. J. McGrath	Mrs. Ruby G. Simpson	Gilson Gardner
B. H. Milliken	G. A. Cook	Mrs. Francis Bell	G. O. Basham
E. A. Macey	George A. Collier	Harold M. Brown	E. J. Skidmore
J. T. Manning	H. G. Freiwald	A. B. Honts	Lawrence Michael
F. W. Watson	Henry C. Ransom	Frank Thompson	T. E. Gilbert
A. B. Eaton	P. E. Dewey	Edward G. Fenwick	Mrs. Louise Boelter
W. D. Medley	O. Robert Howell	Mrs. J. E. English	J. W. Bean
Mrs. H. G. Gibson	J. P. Cragg	Francis Stetson	R. A. Dewey
M. H. Stockett	C. R. Ford	George R. Reeves	Mrs. A. D. Davis
E. L. Bennett	Mrs. H. P. Simpson	Miss Katherine Holmes	E. C. Kriz
H. C. Roberts	F. B. Saegmuller	Frederick S. Hilder	J. McClellan
Fred Doe			

It is suggested that you keep this circular so that you will not forget the purposes and personnel of the League.

A postal card to the Secretary advising of your interest and cooperation will be welcomed.

Hussey Print Clarendon Va

Handbill issued by Better Government League to County Voters during 1931 Campaign for County Board Memberships

(Reduced from Original size)

Once a change in government had been voted the enabling act provided that the governing board shall be elected at the next general county election or in this case on November 3rd, 1931, the new form of government to become effective January 1, 1932.

Feeling that it was most important to start the infant government off with a County Board of the highest caliber, certain leaders in the movement to adopt the County Manager form were instrumental in organizing what was known as the Better Government League (not a forerunner of any now existing organization in the County). This organization of which the author also served as President consisted of 77 representative citizens, with seven from each of the eleven voting precincts whose announced purpose was to support the best-qualified men irrespective of party affiliation or personal friendship.

The League sponsored meetings in the old Odd Fellows Hall on Wilson Boulevard at Hudson Street to hear the 51 candidates who filed for the first Board election. Finally, it endorsed a slate of five-- Harry A. Fellows, then President of the Civic Federation, John C. Gall, Fred A. Gosnell, Mrs. Elizabeth B. Magruder, and F. Freeland Chew. All were elected with the exception of Mr. Chew[20], who was defeated by Lyman M. Kelley, the candidate who ranked sixth on the League's list. Roy S. Braden, the first County Manager, was employed at the initial meeting of the Board held January 2, 1932 and served until his resignation in April, 1936.

One member of the old Board of Supervisors ran for election to the new County Board but was defeated, namely, E. C. Turnburke. Another Supervisor, B. M. Hedrick, was elected Arlington's first County Judge under the new system.

Finally, in an article of this length it is impossible to recount the great forward strides that have been made in Arlington County since the adoption by her citizens of an efficient, trustworthy and modern form of government. Suffice it is to say that as a result of this adoption and the dedicated effort and ceaseless interest on the part of the officials and employees of the County and scores of its civic-minded citizens we constitute today, one of the most progressive, happy and prosperous communities in the United States.

[20] Mr. Chew later completed sixteen years as Member of the County Board.

CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY BOARD

Allwine, Mr. G. Frank.....320 Murray Ave., Clarendon, Va.
Ball, Mr. Wm. L.....Clarendon, Va.
Bowbeer, C. H.....R. F. D., Ballston, Va.
Cannon, Mrs. Florence.....Arlington, Va.
Carl, Mr. Louis C.....Lyon Village, Clarendon, Va.
Chew, Mr. F. Freland.....Lyon Village, Clarendon, Va.
Coe, Mr. H. S.....Arlington, Va.
Cohen, Mr. Albert H.....Clarendon, Va.
Fellows, Mr. Harry A.....East Falls Church, Va.
Forman, Mr. Robert M.....Ballston, Va.
Friess, Mr. William.....Clarendon, Va.
Gall, Mr. John C.....Aurora Hills, Va.
Goff, Mr. F. H.....105 Chestnut Street, Clarendon, Va.
Gosnell, Mr. Fred A.....Jeell Station, Clarendon, Va.
Hall, Mr. E. C.....200 Wilson Boulevard, Clarendon, Va.
Harris, Mrs. Mary B. (Col).....Nauck Station, Ballston, Va.
Head, Mr. James W.....Barcroft, Va.
Hull, Mr. Wm. C.....Leeway, Cherrydale, Va.
Kelley, Mr. Lyman M.....23 East Wilson Boulevard, Clarendon, Va.
Lloyd, Mr. L. C.....75 North Spruce Street, Clarendon, Va.
Magruder, Mrs. Elizabeth B.....Maryland Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Malloy, Joseph D.....Jesse Building, Clarendon, Va.
Martin, Frank E.....Ballston, Va.
McKnight, John A.....114 S. Oak Street, Clarendon, Va.
McShea, William A.....York Street and Alexandria Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Mechem, Thomas R.....475 Washington Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Miller, Harry A.....830 Willett Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Morton, Dr. E. T. (Col).....Halls Hill, Va.
Moseley, C. H. (Col.).....Halls Hill, Va.
Mossburg, John R.....Fox Station, Ballston, Va.
Pickett, W. O.....Rosslyn, Va.
Plymale, Robert E.....York Street and Alexandria Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Pepper, J. C.....Barcroft, Va.
Rauth, C. F.....415 Cherrydale Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Rieder, Frederick.....Ballston, Va.
Ricker, George D.....1231 Wilson Boulevard, Clarendon, Va.
Robertson, J. R.....Clarendon, Va.
Rose, W. R.....Mt. Vernon Boulevard, Clarendon, Va.
Rosenberger, P. B.....Ballston, Va.
Seigel, Harry.....Clarendon, Va.
Sommerville, Jas. A.....Livingstone Heights, Va.
Smith, J. Vernon.....Arlington, Va.
Turnburke, E. C.....35 Preston Avenue, Clarendon, Va.
Wallis, Thomas S.....Cherrydale,, Va.
Warner, G. Samuel.....Cherrydale,, Va.
Williams, James R.....East Falls Church, Va.
Wilson, Herbert L.....Arlington, Va.
Windridge, Fred N.....Rosslyn, Va.
Wolff, Wm. E.....55 Woodstock Street, Clarendon, Va.
Wright, W. W.....Brcroft, R. D. 5, Alexandria, Va.
Yorkdale, S. H.....Cherrydale,, Va.

Candidates for County Board in the November 1931 Election
(Reduced from Original size)