

# Administrative Assistant For Supervisors Is Recommended

By Jane Haas

One of the most important needs for the county of Santa Cruz, recommended for immediate adoption by J. H. Jamison in his business survey for the county, is an administrative assistant to the board of supervisors.

In making this recommendation, Jamison is aware that during 1949 such a proposal caused one of the most serious rifts among the current members of the board.

In July, 1949, the board wrangled for more than four hours over such a proposal. A. A. Horton, county purchasing agent, was the man under consideration for the job at that time.

Then Board Chairman Frank Clement and Supervisor Philip Rowe were in favor of both the administrative assistant and Horton. Supervisor Lloyd Foster bitterly opposed both establishment of the position and Horton, too, as the assistant.

Alvin Gregory (present chairman) opposed the title, suggested then, of county executive officer, and the salary, which was considerably less than the \$400-\$480 now recommended by Jamison. Frank Oetli said he thought he would like more information on the subject, although it had been under discussion for several months.

Rowe's motion naming Horton to the position failed for want of a second, as the chairman could not act.

"I move that we adjourn," Foster said. "We'll study the matter."

Here is Jamison's report:

"Under the terms of our agreement to make an administrative survey of the Santa Cruz county government, we shall submit to you, from time to time, recommendations which, if adopted, will effect an immediate improvement in county government.

"In line with this procedure, it is recommended, therefore, that in the interests of improved county government, the position of administrative assistant to the board of supervisors be established.

"County government is the largest business in Santa Cruz county when viewed from any angle. Its income and expenditures (approximately \$12,000,000) are the greatest; it has more employees and its functions and activities affect more people than any other business in the county.

"But despite the fact that county government is the biggest business in the county it lacks an all important piece of mechanism for efficient and economical operation. Santa Cruz county has some 60,000 stockholders (the taxpayers); it has a board of directors (the board of supervisors); it has more than 450 employees, but the board of supervisors has no administrative assistant to carry out its policies.

"The board of supervisors is primarily a legislative and policy-determining body, and properly so. When Santa Cruz county was first organized, the population was small, the functions of the county were few, and it was a simple matter for the board members to administer those few functions as well as adopt such legislation as was deemed necessary. That time has long passed and today the business of county government is so huge, its ramifications and functions so varied, that experts in their particular fields must be employed.

"As members of a legislative body the supervisors are not and cannot be expected to be administrative experts in the various fields of county government. Rather, they should be expected to represent their constituents in matters of policy.

"It is physically impossible for the board to attempt to serve as both a legislative and administrative body and also to devote the time necessary to policy matters which affect their constituents and the county as a whole.

"The board is sometimes accused of a 'do nothing' policy in administrative and sometimes legislative matters. This charge is the result primarily of the lack of a qualified assistant in whose hands could be centralized much of the county administrative business for which the supervisors are responsible.

"At each board meeting, for example, a stack of correspondence is opened and read to the board by the clerk. Many times these letters require investigation into the circumstances, or a submission of facts before the board can act intelligently in the matter. If, when urged by pressure groups, immediate action is taken, the board is accused of committing itself without having knowledge of all the facts. If the board decides to put the matter over until an investigation can be made, it is often accused of stalling, or worse. The board of supervisors, needs, therefore, a competent, full-time administrative assistant to carry out its orders, to make investigations and

supervise personnel and budgetary control.

"If an administrative assistant were employed it would be he who would make the necessary investigations, accumulate the facts and have them available at the board meetings so that intelligent and speedy action could be taken.

"The need for an administrative assistant is clearly and vividly demonstrated at budget time. Among the numerous administrative duties, but the most important, perhaps, which the supervisors must undertake, is the preparation of the preliminary annual budget. The various department heads and officers submit to the board their estimated requirements for the ensuing fiscal year. The supervisors are then expected to analyze the requirements of the various departments, reduce, eliminate or increase the amounts of such requests according to their best judgments. Obviously, this is nearly an impossible job for them to do intelligently because of a lack of detailed knowledge of the functions and operations of the many governmental departments.

"An administrative assistant, trained and experienced in public administration, would meet with the department heads, analyze their budget requests and submit to the board his recommendations. Such recommendations would be based on known facts in each case and would enable the supervisors to reach a quick and intelligent decision. Overbudgeting and underbudgeting would be prevented.

"The administrative assistant would have great responsibility in preparing the preliminary budget for presentation to the board, but he would serve also as liaison officer and coordinator between the board of supervisors and the various departments and offices. He would keep the board informed at all times of the state of the county government and he would serve as liaison officer between departments and offices within the jurisdiction of the board of supervisors.

"The need for a responsible, trained administrative assistant is recognized by all business men, students of government, grand juries, and it is believed, by the supervisors themselves.

"It is not the intent of this recommendation that such administrative assistant perform the duties or have the power and responsibilities of a county executive or county manager. Such a position, to be effective, must be created by a county charter setting forth in detail the duties, powers and responsibilities of such an officer.

"Our recommendation would restrict the powers of the administrative assistant to fact-finding and general budgetary and personnel supervision. He would be in fact exactly what the title implies, viz. administrative assistant to the board of supervisors.

"An ordinance, if adopted, creating such a position should include at least the duties and responsibilities.

(There follows an outline of such duties as expressed in the above report.)

"Requirements for such a person, at the minimum, should include graduation from college or university of recognized standing with a degree in political science, public administration, business administration, economics, engineering or law and at least two years recent experience in an administrative capacity in county or city government or in corporate busi-

## Sentinel-News To Publish County Government Survey

During the past few weeks, Santa Cruz county supervisors have been receiving reports from J.H. Jamison, San Jose efficiency expert, containing recommendations and suggestions for improving this county's government practices.

The survey was inaugurated early in February by the board of supervisors, upon the request of the county grand jury.

For the past several years the grand jury has been noting antiquated business practices being pursued in various departments. Some are due to a lack of knowledge of newer methods of procedure, some are the results of misguided attempts upon the part of departments heads to save money, while others are due to a lack of funds supplied the offices for their operation.

Jamison was retained by the board to make a salary survey of the county. This was completed in March. Since he already had become familiar with some of the trouble spots while making the salary survey, he agreed to do the administrative survey for \$5000.

The contract signed between the supervisors and Jamison February 20, stipulated the survey would be completed on or before June 1.

To date, he has submitted nine reports, which will be compiled under one cover at the termination of the survey.

Some of the completed reports have been read at regular board meetings and others have not.

In answer to a number of requests from interested residents and taxpayers in the county, the Sentinel-News will publish these reports each Sunday. They will be accompanied by comment wherever it is deemed necessary to fill in the background for our readers.

The first report, recommending the position of an administrative assistant to the board of supervisors, appears today.

### TWIN LAKES-DEL MAR

#### CLUB WILL NOT MEET

Due to the illness of President C. W. Lewallen, the Twin Lakes-Del Mar Improvement club will not hold its regular meeting tomorrow night.

ness; or graduation from high school and five years recent experience in an administrative capacity in county or city government or corporate business."

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