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In our opinion
Adventures in Fantasyland

Someone ought to tell Walt Disney Productions they don't need to take a look at the possibility of locating a Disneyland-type facility in the Chicago area in the near future.

Lyons Township already has a Mickey Mouse organization in the form of the Lyons Township Board of School Trustees.

Besides, after last week's special meeting, two of the board's three members have left no doubt they have some Goofy ideas about the way some \$70 to \$90 million in township school district funds should be handled.

Trustees Joe Nekola and Madeline Bernat believe that the best interests of township taxpayers will be served by replacing longtime School Treasurer George Melichar with a man named Robert Healy on July 1.

What are Healy's qualifications to handle the investment of \$90 million a year (other than the fact that he works with Bernat in the patronage happy office of Circuit Court Clerk Morgan Finley?)

He has a bachelor's degree in accounting. He has taken "a few" classes in finance at Loyola University. He has no experience in investing. His knowledge of investments "does not exceed college level finance."

How, then, did the board arrive at the conclusion that Healy was the best man for the job?

Bernat admitted at last week's meeting that Melichar's performance has never been evaluated by the board.

But that isn't all. Nekola and Bernat:

- Never put together guidelines about what qualifications a replacement for Melichar should have;
- Had applications sent to Nekola's home;
- Didn't interview any candidates other than Healy; and
- Didn't involve School Trustee Ed Spadoni in Healy's interview process. (In fact Spadoni has never met Healy.)

If any local taxing body other than the obscure Board of Township School Trustees tried to get away with that, they'd be hung from the nearest light pole.

The end result of this fiasco is that Lyons Township High School, the largest singular contributor to the township school investment fund, has virtually divorced itself from using the township treasurer's services. Most other local districts are expected to follow suit.

In the words of one resident, "there has been an erosion of confidence in the Township School Board and that's a very meaningful thing to be happening."

You bet that's meaningful.

It means Nekola and Bernat had better vacate that Fantasyland in which they seem to be living and change their minds on the hiring of Healy.

Either that or they'll find themselves involved in that Adventureland known as the Illinois State legislature when local school officials make every effort to abolish the Board of School Trustees entirely.