



*April 29, 1954*  
**CHARLES H. COOK**  
... No opposition  
*Melrose*

# It's Mayor Charles Cook For Belmont

(Other Belmont council news on Page 3.)

BELMONT—Charles H. Cook, member of Belmont City Council since April, 1952, last night was elected mayor without opposition.

The 52-year-old president and general manager of Belmont Engineering Company succeeded Wallace Benson, who continues on the council. In a brief address Cook said:

"I have tried for two years to do a good job. Now, with a balanced council, I know it will be harmonious."

Cook and his wife, Louella, live at 1515 Sixth Ave., Belmont. He is a member of the city's Chamber of Commerce and Lions Club, and belongs to California Golf Club in South San Francisco, the Athenian-Nile Men's Club of Oakland and Oakland Lakes Lodge.

His campaign two years ago was for industrial development of Belmont "similar to Emeryville where the property taxes are kept low due to the large amount of industry."

Before Cook's election to mayor, two new members of the council were seated. They were George L. McCain and Robert S. Hunter who campaigned together in this month's election.

McCain, a graduate of the University of Michigan, is a 37-year-old engineer employed at Swinerton and Walberg Company. He lives at 904 Avon St., and has a wife and three children.

Hunter, president of Viavi Products Company, a pharmaceutical firm, is 45. He has a wife and two children and lives at 1903 Bayview Ave.

Hunter and McCain replaced Donnell B. McCarthy, Belmont attorney, and F. Nason O'Hara, an attorney in San Francisco. O'Hara was out of town but McCarthy was present and was thanked for his services by outgoing Mayor Benson.

Retaining their jobs of city clerk and city treasurer, respectively, were Catherine Heartsner and Rebecca Manning, both of whom were unopposed for election.

Official results of the April 13 election are as follows:

City Council: George L. McCain, 770; Robert S. Hunter, 703; Franklyn A. Martin, 484; Warren R. Mendel, 433; F. Nason O'Hara, 409.

City treasurer: Rebecca Manning, 1,202.

City clerk: Catherine Heartsner, 1,226.

Total ballots issued: 3,850; total votes cast, 1,441; total ballots returned, 2,409; total absentee ballots issued, 5; total absentee votes, 5.

*Mar 23/54*  
**3 Hopefuls On Platform**

BELMONT—Tomorrow night's town hall meeting, spotlighting candidates for two city council posts at the April 13 municipal election, will be attended by only three of the five candidates.

Robert S. Hunter and George McCain, running for office as a team, have declined to accept the invitation to speak on the same platform with the opposition team of City Councilman F. Nason O'Hara and Warren R. Mendel, city planning commissioner.

O'Hara and Mendel had invited Hunter, McCain and Franklyn J. Martin to discuss Belmont expansion on the same platform with them at 8 p.m., tomorrow, at Central School.

As a result of Hunter and McCain's reluctance to attend the meeting, there is a possibility that O'Hara and Mendel may refuse to attend another forum being arranged for next Wednesday night by the Belmont Home Owners, Homeview and Sterling Downs Associations.

A group of citizens backing O'Hara and Mendel, however, will carry through with plans to hold tomorrow night's public meeting, despite the absence of Hunter and McCain. Robert McLennan will act as moderator.

*S.M. Times*

*4/21/1954*

...lowing a caucus Monday night.  
BELMONT — Charles Cook, 56-year-old president of the Belmont Engineering company, was unanimously chosen to succeed Wallace Benson as mayor. Cook has been a council member since 1952. New members George McCain and Robert L. Hunter were seated to replace F. Nason O'Hara and Donnell L. McCarthy. Also sworn in were Clerk Catherine Heartsner and Treasurer Rebecca Manning.  
Paul F. Kelly

# Open Letter to Belmont Voters

1954

Dear Belmont Neighbor:

AGAIN IT'S ELECTION TIME IN BELMONT: Be certain you get the FACTS before you cast your ballot.

INVESTIGATE FOR YOURSELF why trucks use Ralston Avenue. Isn't it more important to also ask WHAT ARE THEY DOING? Those trucks are moving earth from the west end of your city in order to build two of the finest subdivisions on the peninsula --- they are moving earth to the east of the city to build the Belmont leg of the Bayshore Freeway. The City of Belmont is assured of the completion of those subdivisions and the behavior of the trucks by NINETEEN separate restrictions that were given affirmative votes by NASON O'HARA as Councilman and by WARREN MENDEL as Planning Commissioner. For example; NEARLY A HALF MILLION DOLLARS in bonds posted by the subdividers provide that work AND ALL IMPROVEMENTS will be completed -- the amount of dirt on the truck loads -- during dry weather, the loads must be wetted down -- these are just examples of the restrictions that apply and are open for your inspection at the Belmont City Hall.

DISCOVER FOR YOURSELF that no City Council has authority over any school board and that any campaign talk about the betterment of the school system insofar as candidates are concerned is misleading.

REMEMBER the population of Belmont has doubled in the past five years and your city is still growing. The future calls for PLANNED EXPANSION that will fit the needs of all citizens -- not a select few.

MR. NASON O'HARA has just completed eighteen months on the City Council. Each time he cast his vote, he did so according to the dictates of his conscience for the best interests of Belmont. He was not voting in the interests of any "Pressure Group".

MR. WARREN MENDEL served faithfully as Chairman of the City Personnel Board and more recently as a member of the Planning Commission. His actions on these commissions speak for themselves. He invites you to inspect the record.

IN ORDER TO INSURE GOOD GOVERNMENT WHILE BELMONT KEEPS PACE WITH THE PENINSULA!

1. PLANNED EXPANSION:  
Belmont does not have a choice as to whether it will or will not grow; but does have a choice to grow under well planned procedure.
2. Favor close cooperation between City Government bodies such as Fire and Water Districts.
3. Consider the use of a public information bulletin from the city to the people so they may be informed on the activities of the various government bodies.
4. Establish closer liaison between School Board and city bodies until critical school problems are solved.
5. Recognize the fact that a serious problem exists in the unimproved street area and pursue all methods to attain a solution.

Belmont

# Courier Bulletin

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Page 4

Thurs., April 26, 1956

## Our New City Council Is Off to a Smooth Start

Belmont City council's first meeting last week augured political peace and community progress.

What was obvious to everyone was the utterances of outgoing and incoming councilmen and the two incumbents. First, retiring Mayor Benson paved the way for smooth rolling by waiving previous differences with the two remaining councilmen and denying any rancor. It was a good wholesome welcome to the new civic body.

Both his fellow-councilmen, Ildo Rosellini and Charles Cook, permitted Mr. Benson to express the retiring trio's sentiments in agreeable silence and good humor. Mr. Cook, who disdains frilly council talk, invested additional sincerity in the proceedings, by his equanimity and quiet observation of the speech.

Acceptance of their investitures on the council by Charles Judd, Warren Mendel and Victor Wandmayer brought expressions from them of an earnestness to serve capably and impartially.

Robert Hunter exhibited appropriate gravity, forcefulness, and restraint upon his installation as mayor. His election to mayor had indicated the honesty of the five councilmen's assertions for unanimity. Warren Mendel's nomination of Mr. Hunter had denied forthright a previously published claim that he was indisposed—vehemently indisposed—to Mr. Hunter.

The expressions of Mr. Hunter and his companion in the previous council's minority, George McCain, complimenting the three retiring councilmen for the latter's four years service on the council, showed both good sportsmanship and good sense. Their declarations were not an about-face, either. More than once, members of the last council's majority and minority had

said in effect, "I don't doubt the sincerity and good intentions of my opponent, But—".

Such was the obvious. The subtle occurred in the only piece of business considered for action by the new council.

To many, the long discussion of a flagpole as a gift from the City of Belmont to the Carlmont branch of the Red Cross, appeared picayunne. To some, it appeared the new council had devoted half an hour to obtain a result which could have occurred in two minutes. (The subject was tabled for further study.)

But if one reviews that discussion, the subtlety crystallizes into a realistic demonstration of the campaign promises of all three new councilmen, the discretion of the two senior councilmen, and the conciliatory disposition of all five.

The gift of the flagpole had been proposed by Mr. Hunter and endorsed by Mr. McCain at the previous council meeting. The opposing majority "quashed" the proposal. Now, if they chose to press the subject, Mr. Hunter and Mr. McCain could gain satisfaction over their impotent ex-rivals.

Nevertheless, instead of steamrolling their pet through to victory, the two invited opinions from their new fellow councilmen—all three. Then they joined in calling on and listening fully to a citizen in the audience on the subject. Then, in democratic deference, they called on the City attorney for a legal opinion. Finally, in consideration of the citizen's remarks and the legal aspects, the council agreed unanimously to delay action until costs, etc. could be determined.

Sometimes it takes a little longer to be right.

# Hunter, McCain Enter Belmont Race

**BELMONT**—Robert S. Hunter, who has worked behind the scenes in Belmont politics for years, and George L. McCain, a construction engineer, today tossed their hats into the ring as candidates for the April 13 city council election.

Appointed to handle their campaign for election to two city council vacancies was Max King, airlines executive and former secretary to Gov. Earl Warren until 1952.

Entry of McCain and Hunter into the race means there will be at least five candidates for the two council seats, including incumbent F. Nason O'Hara, Warren Mendel who is chairman of the city personnel board, and Franklyn Martin, president of Immaculate Heart of Mary's Holy Name Society.

There has been no expressed opposition to the candidacies of the incumbent city clerk, Catherine A. Heartsner, and incumbent treasurer, Mrs. Rebecca Manning. Both have qualified for the April 13 ballot by filing nomination petitions.

Both Hunter and McCain said they are entering the race as the result of overtures made by a "group of local citizens who urged that we run." Their nomination papers will be filed just under the noon deadline tomorrow by King, they added.

Hunter, 45, of 1903 Bayview Ave., is president of Viavi Products Company, San Francisco pharmaceutical firm. He is a former president of the Belmont Home Owners' Association, active in the Belmont Chamber of Commerce and served as treasurer of the now-defunct Better Belmont League.

Hunter, a resident of Belmont for seven years, lives with his wife, Erna, and has two children—Robert S. Jr., a sailor stationed in San Diego, and Sandra, a San Jose State College freshman.

McCain, 37, lives at 904 Avon St., with his wife, Kathryn, and three children, Karen, 13; Alan, 12, and Marilyn, 8. He is chairman of the Methodist Church building committee, and his wife is a supervising den mother in the Boy Scouts.

McCain is employed by Swinderton & Walberg, San Francisco construction engineering firm, and has lived in Belmont for five years.

This is the first venture into politics for both candidates, who announce they will run as a team.

# Five Seek Two Council Seats; Treasurer and Clerk Unopposed

Belmont's political campaign today saw five men trying for the two City Council seats at the April 13 election and the incumbent city clerk and city treasurer running unopposed.

The five candidates for the two

Council posts are F. Nason O'Hara, incumbent, who lives at 2000 Sharon avenue; Warren Mendel, 2705 Ponce avenue; Franklyn Martin, 1908 Arbor avenue; Robert S. Hunter, 1903 Bayview avenue; and George L. McCain, 904 Avon street.

No opposition developed in the race for city clerk and city treasurer, with Clerk Catherine A. Heartsner and Treasurer Rebecca Manning the only ones on the ballot for those offices.

O'Hara, 42-year-old San Francisco attorney, was appointed to the Council in September, 1952. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have two children, Sharon, 10, and Brian, 5.

Mendel, chairman of the Belmont Personnel board and a member of the Planning commission, is an employe of the machinery sales division of the Merner's Lumber & Hardwood company in Palo Alto. He is married and has two children, Marcia 6, and Mark 1.

Martin, who is president of the Immaculate Heart of Mary's Holy Name society in Belmont, is associated with the Charles Brown company in San Francisco.

Hunter and McCain, running as a team, are having their campaign handled by Max King, airlines executive, and former secretary to Gov. Earl Warren until 1952.

Hunter, 45, is president of Viavi Products company of San Francisco. A resident of Belmont for seven years, Hunter and his wife, Erna, have two children, Robert S. Jr., a sailor stationed in San Diego, and Sandra, a freshman at San Jose State college.

McCain is employed by Swinderton & Walberg in San Francisco. He and his wife, Kathryn, have three children, Karen, 13; Alan, 12, and Marilyn, 8.

The first venture into politics by Hunter and McCain, the two candidates said they were entering the race because of overtures made by a "group of local citizens who urged that we run."

## County's Tax Share

Robert C. Kirkwood, state controller, today announced that San Mateo county's share of the \$4,652,805 in the Highway Users Tax fund for apportionment to counties is \$84,419.39 for the month ended January 31.

## Belmont Voters League Set Up

**BELMONT**—Formation of the "Belmont Voters League" and election of two permanent officers was announced today.

Elected president was Max King, airlines executive and campaign manager seeking the election of Robert S. Hunter and George L. McCain at the April 13 municipal election for two council seats.

King explained the organization was founded by a group of Belmont citizens desiring to bring up campaign issues and endorse candidates.

Named treasurer was Mrs. Richard Dillinger, who has been active in Belmont women's organizations.

The newly-formed organization last night endorsed the candidacies of Hunter and McCain, and announced another meeting will be held at 8 p.m., next Tuesday, at a place to be selected later.

## Police To Enforce Night Parking Law

Belmont police this week started issuing warning tags to motorists who leave their cars parked on the street overnight in the residential areas.

This marks the second time within a year the department has been told to enforce the 15-year-old ordinance. On the last occasion the order was promptly withdrawn after officials were deluged with calls from residents objecting to the enforcement.

Patrolmen Friday began issuing warning tags and will continue for a week to acquaint residents with the law making it unlawful for them to park vehicles on city streets between 2 and 6 a.m.

The purpose of the ordinance is to allow the street department time during the night to sweep the streets.

Belmont  
Courier Bulletin

3-8-1954



**WALLACE BENSON**

... Changes his mind

## Benson's Hat In Ring for '56

**BELMONT** — Former Mayor Wallace Benson today became perhaps the first politician in the United States to announce his candidacy for re-election in 1956.

His announcement, without precedent in Belmont politics, came as an aftermath of his heated declaration at last night's public forum on Benson's pet project—a municipal swimming pool.

Last night he heatedly declared that after his term of office expires with the April, 1956, city elections he would withdraw from all activities, drawing sporadic applause from some of the 150 persons present.

His answer to the applause was a question to those in the audience as to what they have done for the city of Belmont during their residence.

Today Benson declared he was ready to answer his critics in the best way he knows — at the polls in 1956.

# Outgoing Council Votes Itself Plaques <sup>4/22/56</sup>

**BELMONT**—Belmont's "split-ever-widening breach, decision" council last night closed out two years on the same discordant note—3 to 2.

The issue, brought up by an outgoing councilman, was whether a new precedent should be set—award of a \$20 plaque to each retiring councilman.

Mayor Wallace Benson, after being handed a note of reminder by Councilman Ildo L. Rosellini, brought up the subject.

He thought, the mayor said, it would be a good idea to have plaques made for himself, Rosellini and Councilman Charles H. Cook, all retiring from the council.

"Has this been customary in the past?" asked Councilman Robert S. Hunter. As a freshman councilman two years ago, it was Hunter who dropped the wine-and-dine bomb on the council table kicking off the

"I do not operate by custom," replied Benson.

Pressed further by Hunter, Benson admitted this would set a precedent. That other council members were not so honored.

"I've never submitted an expense account to the city," chimed in Rosellini, "and never received one cent from the city for the past four years work.

"If you want to rely on custom, we would not receive them (the plaques) . . . and unless it (the vote) is unanimous I would not accept."

"Isn't this usually a spontaneous gesture on the part of residents?" The question was Councilman George L. McCain's, Hunter's runningmate of two years ago, a part of the two-member minority the past two years.

"We waited for a spontaneous demonstration but it didn't come," shot back Benson.

"What is the decision?" asked Benson.

"I don't believe it is in order," answered Hunter.

"This is the same maliciousness you've shown before," Rosellini declared, turning toward Hunter seated beside him.

"The Armstrong suit, wine and dine, grand jury investigation," all were instigated by Hunter, Rosellini charged. He moved the plaques be presented at the next meeting of the new council, Tuesday, April 17, and if the vote isn't unanimous he said he would pay for his personally.

Cook seconded Rosellini's motion.

Rosellini's motion passed, 3 to 2, with the prospective plaque-receivers favoring, and Hunter and McCain opposed to spending \$60 in city funds for the mementos.