

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Special Meeting

September 5, 1969
9:30 A.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

The meeting was called to order with Mayor LaRue presiding.

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmen Atkison, Gage, Janes, Johnson, MacCorkle, Price,
Mayor LaRue
Absent: None

Mayor LaRue announced that this special meeting had been called to discuss the budget for the coming year. He added that City Manager Norman Barker was also present.

The Council set up times for future meetings with the heads of Brackenridge Hospital and the Utility System to present their budgets. It was decided that the Council would hear department heads rather than each separate division head. Mr. Barker noted that Mr. Kinney, Director of Electric Utility, would be out of town the entire week of the meetings. He suggested that R. L. Hancock would effectively represent Mr. Kinney.

AUDITORIUM AND COLISEUM BUDGETS

Mr. Gene White, Director of the Auditorium and Coliseum, appeared before the Council to discuss his budget for 1969-70. Councilman Gage noted that the Coliseum was booked for almost every weekend in the coming year. Mr. White said that most of the events did take place on the weekends. As a result, the Coliseum and Auditorium always had excessive overtime. He was asking for four additional people to work on a shift basis to reduce this overtime.

Mr. Barker noted that for the last three years the Coliseum had come to the Council for supplemental emergency funds. This year was no exception but hopefully this problem would be eliminated by hiring the four new people. He also noted that there was \$20,000.00 in the new budget for improving the acoustical system. This would include correcting the P.A. system and putting in sound panels under the balcony, at the cost of \$12,000.00.

Mr. White estimated that the revenue from both facilities for the coming year would be \$165,000.00. He explained the items under "Contracts and Services" as \$5,000.00 for heating gas, \$4,500.00 for use of City vehicles, and \$3,000.00 for providing clean uniforms to the employees.

He stated that the Auditorium needed a fulltime sound equipment operator. At the present time the equipment was being operated by an electrician from the Electric Department, who worked at the Auditorium in his spare time. Mr. White asked the Council's permission to search for a competent individual, someone who could work with the artists and handle equipment also. When such a person was found, he would return to the Council to request a supplemental allocation of \$10,000.00.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DISCUSSED

It was pointed out by Mr. Barker that the Chamber of Commerce received funds out of the Electric Utility budget. The Chamber of Commerce was allotted \$5,000.00 for the publication of pamphlets designed to bring conventions to the Coliseum but the money did not come out of Auditorium funds.

TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dr. Ben Primer of the Travis County Health Department appeared before the Council to request an additional physician to assist him. Mr. Barker explained that the Health Department was funded by the County, State, and the Austin Independent School District, as well as the City. In past years the State had paid the salaries of physicians. However, this year Dr. Primer was asking for money for the doctor from the City of Austin.

Mayor LaRue asked why the \$15,750 allocated for MH-MR could not be included in the Travis County Health Department budget. Dr. Primer explained that the MH-MR people were also funded by several groups and that it was simply easier to show them as a separate facility on the books. He added that the money would fund a fulltime staff nurse and two assistants. Part of the sum was reimbursed to the City.

Councilman Johnson expressed concern with the City's health card service. He stated that the procedure, which included an X-ray and a blood test for \$3.00, had been discontinued in other cities. He wondered if the charge covered the cost to the City, and whether the City could be better served by putting more emphasis on inspecting the local establishments. He asked for a more uniform enforcement of City health rules as well. Dr. Primer said that the health card program was making money.

City Manager Barker noted that a citizen's committee had drawn up a new food service ordinance and that it was in the Legal Department at that time. Councilman Johnson asked that the ordinance in effect be more available for distribution and that the Health Department get out to investigate all establishments and at the same time, look into the effectiveness of the health cards.

Councilman Johnson then asked about the bad condition of many alleys in the City. He asked if perhaps there was a need for more inspectors or if they were not doing their jobs. The City Manager stated that he would look into any reports that Councilman Johnson routed to his office. He added that there was a suggestion that garbage cans be ticketed.

Councilman Johnson also brought up the problem of abandoned cars. He felt that the Health Department had so little time to enforce the food service ordinance that they wouldn't have any time to clear the streets of the abandoned cars. He told of the Driskill Hotel's practice of cleaning out its venting system with a fire every month, and asked that such health violations be stopped.

Councilman Price asked about water pollution on the lakes caused by raw, running sewage being dumped from houseboats. He stated that there were many such boats without tanks and he suggested that these boats be tagged and then fined if the owners had not corrected the violation.

Dr. Primer stated that he was working on the problem, and that his inspectors were working on the weekends to catch the culprits. He felt that there were too few pumps to service the boat tanks. He had requested that \$2,000.00 be allocated for a new pump. At the present time there were only two pumps for emptying the tanks.

Councilman Price also thought the State should pay the salary of the additional doctor requested. Dr. Gentry, Dr. Primer's associate, thought that the City would do well to pay the salary of one of the top administrators in the Health Department, rather than having the State pay the salary of all top administrators.

Dr. Primer was also interested in getting a new van for reaching people in the outer parts of Travis County with inoculations and other health care. He said that there had been two cases of dyptheria in the last month from such areas. Councilman Johnson commended the Health Department on its inoculation program and felt that it should do more preventive work.

The van would cost \$25,000.00 and would need an operator, which would cost an additional \$3,000.00. Dr. Primer stated that the van could be used for other purposes, such as disseminating family planning information. He hoped that the money for that van could come out of the annual surplus he always had. Last year the surplus had been \$87,000.00.

The Council then discussed chronic alcoholism and suicide as two big problems in Travis County. Councilman Johnson stressed the need for arranging priorities. Dr. Primer suggested that someone from the outside be brought in to survey the Health Department.

Dr. Primer stated that the money received from the State each year was a fairly fixed amount. The City's percentage of contributions rose each year. Mayor LaRue said that a citizen's group was being formed to study the City's health procedures and how the City's responsibilities meshed with the State and County's. Mayor LaRue felt that the Council had to take a greater responsibility for spending the taxpayer's money in an ever-rising percentage.

The Council then discussed rodent control and an unfilled therapist position. Dr. Primer mentioned family planning and the Headstart Program, stating they were in the process of being reorganized.

He also described other programs not directly related to health but funded by the State for the Travis County Health Department. He mentioned the Homemakers Program, the Educational Rehabilitation Service, and the Austin Evaluation Center. Some of the City's money supported these facilities.

There was an outbreak of venereal disease in Austin at the present time, according to Dr. Primer. He noted that the State had added another investigator and that the VD clinic was being kept open for longer hours.

Mayor LaRue asked the Council members to be available for the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for continued hearings on the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting then adjourned.

APPROVED: Francis LaRue
Mayor

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk