

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Special Meeting

September 23, 1968

11:00 A.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL

The meeting was called to order with Mayor Akin presiding.

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmen Janes, LaRue, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin

Absent: None

Mayor Akin announced that the Special Meeting had been called for further study of the budget.

PERSONNEL CONSULTANTS REPORT DISCUSSED

City Manager Robert Tinstman announced that the Personnel Consultants had been meeting with him and they expected to have a proposal for a new pay plan for the Council on the 1st of November. He also stated that the City had \$835,000.00 for wage increases and \$306,000.00 for merit increases in the General Fund. There was also \$250,000.00 in the Utility Fund for wage increases and \$120,000.00 for merit increases. He added that the employee who received a one-step increase would probably not get a merit increase. He also discussed the criteria for merit increases.

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: 1968-69 BUDGET

Councilman Long asked if the police were going to get an increase of at least \$50.00 per month. Mr. Tinstman said that he hoped so. He expected the new wage plan to go into effect just before Christmas or right after January 1st.

Mr. Norman Barker, Director of Finance, was asked if he thought the City's anticipated income could cover the wage increases. He stated that there was no way to estimate exactly the coming year's revenue. Based on his experience, however, he thought the revenue would come close to the estimated figure.

Councilman Janes brought up the point that next year all the City had to do was make an incorrect estimate on the receipts on the sales tax, maybe by 10%, and the City would in effect use up all of the money that had been contemplated in the tax reduction of 5 cents per \$100.00.

Mayor Akin thought it was perhaps a mistake to reduce taxes by 5%. He calculated that revenues were not certain and that expenditures were rising. He mentioned the \$300,000.00 needed for crime control in Austin, including payroll increases and the purchase of additional equipment for the Police Department.

The Council discussed the revenues and expenditures of Brackenridge Hospital.

Councilman Janes was disappointed with the low figure for sale of property. Mr. Tinstman said that perhaps the revenue estimate was conservative.

Mr. Tinstman also explained the ways that debt service on bonds and capital expenditures were shown on the budget.

Mr. Tinstman felt that the amount he was proposing for expenditure purposes during any given fiscal period ought to approximately equal the revenues received during that period. He admitted that he was proposing to spend several hundred thousand dollars more than he expected to receive, but he felt that of those expenditures \$900,000.00 were non-recurring items. They included right of way for MoPac Boulevard, Highway 183 and Lamar Boulevard, as well as moving and expansion of the public works yard.

Councilman Long felt that the tax cut recommended could be made and that it would be a good thing for the poor. She thought that the City would be able to fund all of the programs needed, even with the tax cut. She felt that the budget was a good one. Councilman Nichols and Mayor Akin were also in favor of the proposed budget.

City Attorney Doren Eskew advised the Council that the Budget had to be adopted as an ordinance, requiring three readings. Before voting on the ordinance, the Council had to list the amendments to the Budget, to be filed with the City Clerk and to become a part of the record.

Mayor Akin introduced the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AND APPROVING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 1968, AND TERMINATING SEPTEMBER 30, 1969, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR EACH DEPARTMENT, PROJECT AND ACCOUNT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

The ordinance was read the first time and Councilman Long moved that the rule be suspended and the ordinance passed to its second reading. The motion, seconded by Councilman Nichols, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin
Noes: Councilman LaRue

The ordinance was read the second time and Councilman Long moved that the rule be suspended and the ordinance passed to its third reading. The motion, seconded by Councilman Nichols, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin
Noes: Councilman LaRue

The ordinance was read the third time and Councilman Long moved that the ordinance be finally passed. The motion, seconded by Councilman Nichols, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin
Noes: Councilman LaRue

The Mayor announced that the ordinance had been finally passed.

AIRPORT STUDY DISCUSSED

The Municipal Airport study caused some discussion. Councilman Long had reservations about starting the study. She was in favor of waiting until the next bond issue. She favored an area study with perhaps an airport built between San Antonio and Austin. She felt the proposed study was too small in concept to be awarded to a group of consultants. Mr. Tinstman thought that perhaps the Regional Planning Commission would be willing to pick up part of the cost of the study. The Council then discussed some of the problems with the present airport.

5 CENT TAX REDUCTION DISCUSSED

Councilman LaRue pointed out that the City had reduced its contingency fund from \$580,000.00 to \$118,000.00, and that the City had reduced its other cushion from \$126,000.00 to \$26,000.00. With the 5% wage increase for City employees, he felt that the budget needed an addition of \$100,000.00 to reach the figure of \$835,000.00. He calculated that the minimum amount necessary to correct the crime situation in Austin would be \$300,000.00, allocated to the Police Department for wages, equipment, etc. He felt that if the 5 cent tax cut was not passed the City would have \$375,000.00 more to fight crime.

Mr. Tinstman suggested that the Council might want to put 3/4 of the \$65,000.00 allocated to MH-MR into the contingency fund and give it to MH-MR on a quarterly basis. Councilman Janes was not sure that the City was getting its full value for the money spent on MH-MR. He did agree to go along with the allocation for the coming year.

Councilman Long was in favor of reserving \$180,000.00 for paving in the St. Edward's area, as was Councilman Janes. Mr. Tinstman had suggested that the paving could be set aside for one year and the money could then be used for fighting crime.

Councilman Nichols suggested that the City Manager call in the department heads to tell them that the Council had passed the budget and expected all of the programs to be implemented.

Councilman Janes felt the City should follow a conservative policy and collect as much equity as possible. He thought the 5 cent tax cut was a "sop" and that it "didn't amount to much." It was pointed out that a \$10,000.00 residence would be taxed \$3.75 more a year.

The Council then discussed how the tax reduction would affect the City's bond rating.

ORDINANCE - MUNICIPAL AD VALOREM TAXES

Mayor Akin introduced the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE FIXING AND LEVYING MUNICIPAL AD VALOREM TAXES FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, FOR THE YEAR 1968; AND FOR EACH YEAR THEREAFTER UNTIL OTHERWISE PROVIDED; DIRECTING THE ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION THEREOF; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

The ordinance was read the first time and Councilman Nichols moved that the rule be suspended and the ordinance passed to its second reading. The motion, seconded by Councilman Long, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin
Noes: Councilman LaRue

The ordinance was read the second time and Councilman Nichols moved that the rule be suspended and the ordinance passed to its third reading. The motion, seconded by Councilman Long, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin
Noes: Councilman LaRue

The ordinance was read the third time and Councilman Nichols moved that the ordinance be finally passed. The motion, seconded by Councilman Long, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin
Noes: Councilman LaRue

The Mayor announced that the ordinance had been finally passed.

IMPROVEMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Councilman LaRue offered the following resolution and moved its adoption:

(RESOLUTION)

THAT: The crime rate in Austin is up approximately 10% this year. Major Crime - January through June.

THAT: There is a great shortage of policemen in Austin. Twenty-nine men on the Street. (American Statesman, September 11, 1968) Five resignations reported. (American Statesman, September 7, 1968). One police cadet two days later.

THAT: The City recognize the loss of experienced personnel due to inequities in the pay scale of the Police Department, causing an expensive training of new men continuously, which is both expensive to the taxpayers, and dangerous to the safety of the people;

THAT: A patrolman on the street one year represents an investment of at least ten thousand dollars of the taxpayers' money.

THAT: The Crime Prevention Detail costs the City of Austin Fifty-Six Thousand Dollars per year. Eight men.

THAT: The Fire Prevention Department cost to the City of Austin is One Hundred and Sixty Thousand Dollars per year. Eighteen people involved.

THAT: The Police Animal Control (DOGS) cost is Fifty-five Thousand Dollars per year. Six people.

THAT: A recommendation for fourteen more policemen in the present budget has no significance because of the pay scale in the Police Department.

THAT: A long-range study of the overall salary structure of the Police Department be a part of the findings and recommendation of the City Manager.

June, 1968

Lewis F. Powell, Jr., President of the American Bar Association, 1964-65. Appointed by President Johnson to the National Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice.

1. Property loss to crime. Approximately Four Billion Dollars does not include loss to organized crime. (Several Billion)
2. Most street crimes committed by youngsters. 50% arrested for Burglary and Larceny, and 60% Auto theft are 18 years old and under. High percentage aggravated assault made by 18 to 24 year old group.

3. The risk of victimization from crime is highest among the lower income groups for all offenses except homicide, larceny and vehicle theft. Crime effects weigh most heavily on nonwhites for all offenses except larceny.
4. Organized crime also takes its toll from this same group. There are 24 identified criminal cartels, originally known as the "Mafia" and now as the "La Cosa Nostra". Controlled by a small group at the top they conduct major racket activities through thousands of criminals across the country. They supply illegal goods and services, gambling, narcotics, loan sharking and prostitution. They have also infiltrated legitimate business. Force, threat of force and extortion are standard methods.
5. The victims are the poor, the uneducated and the culturally deprived. In the great cities where organized crimes flourishes, the victims come largely from the ghettos.

THAT: A Legislative committee chaired by Representative Cory is conducting an investigation into the suggested connection between vending machine operators and tavern operators in Dallas, Austin and other Texas Cities; and a local news media representative from the American-Statesman, NAT HENDERSON, is to testify before this committee. And, that the word "Mafia" is mentioned in the article reporting the scheduled meetings. (American-Statesman, September 11, 1968)

RESOLVED: That the City Manager be requested to submit a comprehensive plan designed to bring about a reduction in the incidence of crime in the City of Austin. Cost estimates included. Taking into consideration all of the modern methods used here and elsewhere in the prevention and detection of crime, consideration should also be given to the availability of additional technological training and equipment.

THAT: The proposed tax reduction of five cents would only reduce the property taxes on a ten thousand dollar home by three dollars and seventy-five cents per year.

THAT: The crime rate in Austin must be reduced.

RESOLVED: That the sum of money represented by the proposed five cent tax cut in the present budget be ear-marked for a comprehensive crime reduction program, and that this money be placed in the Council contingency fund until the cost of this program can be determined.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Janes.

Chief Bob Miles, Head of the Police Department, appeared before the Council to discuss the Police Department budget, police training in Austin, strengthening the department by using women for traffic control, the public's antipathy towards police, and a scramble system for the police radios.

Chief Miles said that if the resolution was designed to improve the Police Department, then he was all for it. Councilman Long said that she thought that some of the remarks in the resolution were derogatory to the Department, and she objected to the implication that the Mafia was active in Austin.

Mayor Akin expressed objection to the implication that things in the Police Department were not under control and were not already being pursued. He was not in favor of the resolution.

Councilman Janes did not believe that the resolution carried any indication that there was laxness in the Police Department. He felt that there was room in that Department for improvement. Therefore he was in favor of the resolution.

After this discussion by the Council members, Councilman Nichols offered the following substitute motion: that the City Manager be instructed to get with the Chief of Police and to continue his study as to how law enforcement might be improved in the City of Austin; and that the Council stands clearly behind this Police Department and would continue to do so; and that the City Manager submit the report back to the Council.

The motion, seconded by Councilman LaRue, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Janes, LaRue, Long, Nichols, Mayor Akin

Noes: None

ADJOURNMENT

The Council then adjourned.

APPROVED: _____


Mayor

ATTEST: _____

City Clerk