

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Recessed Meeting .

July 21, 1947
8:00 P.M.

Council Chamber, City Hall

The meeting was called to order, with Mayor Miller presiding.

Roll call

Present: Councilmen Bartholomew, Glass, Johnson, Mayor Miller, and
Councilman Thornberry - 5

Absent : None

Present also: Guiton Morgan, City Manager; Trueman E. O'Quinn, City Attorney; J. E. Motheral, Director of Public Works; W. E. Seaholm, Director of Public Utilities; J. D. Huffman, Finance Director; W. T. Williams, Jr., Tax Assessor & Collector; Members of the School Board; the Citizens' Tax Advisory Committee; and other interested citizens.

The Mayor announced that this was a joint meeting of the City Council with the School Board, and the Citizens' Tax Advisory Committee to discuss the tax rate for the ensuing year and the percentage of value at which property is to be assessed.

Thereupon the Mayor submitted figures compiled by the City Manager, showing tentative estimates of assessments for tax purposes, tentative tax rates, tax levy and collections for the year ending December 31, 1947, collectible during 1948, based on an estimated total valuation of \$200,000,000 as a result of the reappraisal program.

The matter of determining the percentage of value at which property should be assessed, and particularly the advisability of levying a higher ratio of assessment for school purposes in order to insure a minimum salary of \$2400 per year for the school teachers, the ratio of assessment for General Fund and Interest & Sinking Fund purposes to remain at 66-2/3% of actual value, was discussed at length.

R. W. Byram, President of the School Board, stated that the School Board did not wish to be in the position of recommending what the ratio of assessment should be, but that it was the consensus of the Board that an assessment of 75% of full value for school purposes would come nearer

approximating the schedules they had hoped to set up. In this connection, it was pointed out by the Mayor that when the citizens approved the reappraisal program, it was generally understood that the assessments would be on a 66-2/3% basis.

Landon Bradfield, Chairman of the Citizens' Tax Advisory Board, stated that the Committee wished to make it clear that it does not know what the outcome of the appraisal is going to be, except that it will be fair to everybody on a proper basis, and the Committee voted to say to the City Council that it hoped that the City Council might find it possible to wait until the returns from the reappraisal program are in before fixing the rate, which will probably be in August, and therefore the Committee asks the City Council to delay fixing the tax rate and the ratio of assessment until the returns are in. Mr. Bradfield, speaking as an individual, further stated that he thought the people of Austin felt that the School Board should await the outcome of the reappraisal before making their demands - that there is a responsibility on the part of the School Board to wait.

Ed St. John, speaking individually and not as a member of the Citizens' Tax Advisory Committee, declared that if the reappraisal valuations are \$200,000,000, the people of Austin are going to pay a great deal more in taxes and that he wanted to see them sold on this after it is over with, and that serious consideration should be given to the ratio of assessment.

L. Theo Bellmont suggested that before any action is taken by the City Council, a series of meetings in different localities be held to acquaint the citizens with the tax situation in order to allay any fears they may have about an increase in their taxes.

Following the lengthy discussion, Mayor Miller asked the School Board if they would be willing to take chances with the City on raising the required revenue at a 66-2/3% assessment, and postpone any amendment to the City Charter until next June in order to see what the situation might be then.

After considering the above proposal in conference, the School Board submitted substantially the following statement: That, realizing the numerous uncertainties involved in the reappraisal program and the impossibility of getting the exact figures at this time, the Board had come to the conclusion that the wisest thing to do would be to accept the proposal of a 66-2/3% assessment for this year, and when they have exact information next year, to make any request that they see fit at that time.

The Mayor then asked the citizens present if they were in agreement with the proposal that the percentage of assessment for taxable purposes be placed at 66-2/3%, with a tax rate of \$1 for General Fund purposes, 70¢ for School Fund purposes, with probably a reduction in the Interest & Sinking Fund rate later, and there were no objections raised.

Upon motion, seconded and carried, the meeting was recessed at 10:45 P. M., subject to call of the Mayor.

Attest:

Helen McMillan

City Clerk

Approved:

Tom Miller

MAYOR