

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Special Meeting

July 14, 1970

1:00 P.M.

Council Chamber, City Hall

The meeting was called to order with Mayor LaRue presiding.

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmen Atkison, Gage, Janes, Johnson, Price, Mayor LaRue

Absent: Councilman MacCorkle

Mayor LaRue stated this was a Special Called Meeting of the Austin City Council on July 14, 1970, for the specific purpose of discussing the problems that have come up because of the receipt of a letter indicating Austin Transit Company will cease transportation operations on July 31.

A poll of the Council revealed that no Council member had received a copy of the letter mentioned. Mayor LaRue had read a letter which a member of the Press received. The City Manager had received a Xerox copy of a letter addressed to the Mayor and Council postmarked St. Louis.

Mayor LaRue, recognizing the urgency of the problem and desiring to solve it in a proper manner, called the Council into Executive Session to get an interpretation from the Legal Counsel as to the legal position of the City of Austin. He announced to those present, that only the legality of the Council's position would be discussed in this Session.

After the Executive Session, the Council resumed its open session.

Mayor LaRue stated the City of Austin was faced with the cessation of the operation of the American Transit Corporation, and read a copy of the letter received by the City Manager. The last day of operation is July 31, 1970. The Mayor said the Council was meeting today in the hopes of doing something constructive prior to Thursday, at which time there is scheduled a hearing on the subject.

The City Manager, Mr. Andrews, stated the July 31st date gives the public and the City a very short time in which to make other arrangements than the American Transit to get to work. He asked for direction from the Council as to whether or not to proceed immediately to find out what the alternatives might be in securing public transportation.

Councilman Janes stated caution should be taken in a question of this magnitude, but that the City Manager had made a constructive suggestion - that he explore all of the alternatives, possible legal action, possible other sources of transportation and have something to report back on Thursday.

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Councilman Johnson noted this was the second time the news media had been used to notify the public, and it seems there is a communication problem between St. Louis and the seven members of this Council. He suggested that the officials in St. Louis be notified to have a representative from the Company present Thursday, and make every effort to find out the alternatives that this Company will offer, if any.

Councilman Price stated he had just been handed a copy of the letter made from a copy of one sent to the City Manager. A few days ago, this letter had been passed out to the news media before the City Council knew anything about it. He stated that if the bus company is not going to perform, the Council will need to get a bus company in here. The company has been unfair to its employees by giving only 15 days' notice. It is unfair to everyone and he, too, asked that some of the officials of the company come down. He wanted to study every possibility of getting transportation into the City.

Councilman Atkison commented that he would hope that Austin Transit and this Council could get together in this Council Room and try to come to some understanding in order that bus service might be provided for the people of Austin. He believed a meeting between the City and the owners of Austin Transit could be held and that these matters could be worked out.

Councilman Johnson emphasized the importance of pursuing the hearing Thursday as the public realizes there are areas not served with transportation -- and whether it is Austin Transit or someone else, there must be plans to serve this entire community. If the company would come and produce the evidence required in the franchise, he would be willing to make the necessary changes. Private enterprise could not be asked to operate without a profit. To this day, the Council had not received even clarification about the holiday service. He expressed hope that representatives of the company would be present.

Councilman Gage moved that the Council ask the Mayor to call the President of American Transit Company, St. Louis, and extend to him or his representatives an invitation to come to Austin on Thursday or as early as convenient to meet with the Council to discuss the problems and seek a solution. The motion, seconded by Councilman Atkison, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Atkison, Gage, Janes, Johnson, Price, Mayor LaRue
Noes: None
Absent: Councilman MacCorkle

Councilman Johnson moved that the Council ask the City Manager to pursue all avenues of solving the public transportation problems in this community, and with the thought in mind of being prepared to present a report to the Council by Thursday; and if possible, a recommendation. The motion, seconded by Councilman Janes, carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmen Gage, Janes, Johnson, Price, Mayor LaRue
Noes: Councilman Atkison
Absent: Councilman MacCorkle

Councilman Atkison explained his negative vote as he was hoping not to take any action until such time as the Council has a chance to talk with American Transit in the Thursday meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Price moved that the Council adjourn.

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

Ayes: Councilmen Atkison, Gage, Janes, Johnson, Price, Mayor LaRue
Noes: None
Absent: Councilman MacCorkle

APPROVED:

Mayor

ATTESTED:

E. B. ...

City Clerk