

Tuesday, October 4, 1955.

Council reconvened. Present 7, Goering, Hooker, Humiston, Jensen, Perdue, Stojack, Tollefson. Absent 2, Battin, Bratrud.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

This being the date to which hearing on the Preliminary Budget was continued, the matter was taken up at this time.

Mr. V. W. Stevenson, Treasurer of the Tacoma Transit Company, was present to speak in favor of a reduction to 1% in the franchise tax paid by his company. Dr. Humiston, Chairman of the Finance Committee, reported that they have recommended a reduction from 3% to 2% on this item. Mr. Stevenson said that, although the reduction was not as much as they had hoped for, it was gratifying to the employees that Council had considered their request and they are very happy with the recommendation. Col. Hooker said he concurred in the recommendation of the Finance Committee. The Mayor added that he felt certain the Council will follow the committee's recommendation.

The representatives of the Metropolitan Park Board were the next to appear before the Council. Mr. Ralph Williams, Board Member, appealed to the Council to grant the Park Board an additional \$35,000 over the \$250,000 recommended by the Finance Committee, which would cover the salary increases they hope to grant their employees to bring their salaries up to the first bracket of City employees. He said he didn't think it would be possible to revise the Park District Budget to give these increases without curtailing services, and he urged Council to give serious consideration to this request for \$35,000. Mr. Wilson, Dr. Nace, Park Board member, and Howard Harmon, Superintendent of Green Houses, all spoke about the necessity for an increase in wages for Park Employees, who for years have been paid from \$60 to \$80 less than other city employees doing comparable work. Dr. Humiston said he agreed that Park wages are substandard, and pointed out that every City department's budget requests had been drastically reduced in order to maintain salaries at a high level. On the other hand for years the Park Board has spent its money for an expanded program instead of wages, he pointed out. Mr. Williams called attention to the fact that for many years the City of Tacoma has enjoyed the full 15 mills without using any money for parks, while other cities have not had this advantage, as the Parks in most cases are run by the City. He felt certain the City Budget could be re-adjusted to provide \$35,000 for wage increases for the Park employees, he said. The Mayor reviewed the circumstances leading up to the necessity for the City of Tacoma having to come to the financial assistance of the Park Board when they lost revenue by the reduction of tax receipts from 3 mills to 1 mill by State Law. In conclusion he said that, inasmuch as the mill had increased in value through an increase in assessed valuation in the City, he felt the Park Board should be allowed the full value of two mills, which would be approximately \$261,000 rather than \$250,000. He did not believe it the duty of the Council to tell the Park Board how to administer the parks or how to spend their funds, he added. Mr. Jensen agreed that if the monetary value of a mill is increased, the Park Board should also receive the benefit of this increase from the City. Mr. Perdue remarked that the taking on of additional facility, requiring additional maintenance, made the Park Board's problem more difficult and he did not feel they were justified in calling on the City Council for more funds when they continued to take over new facilities. Dr. Humiston said that the Committee felt that a guaranteed sum of \$250,000 was as much as 2 mills, taking into consideration defaults in taxes, etc. He said the Committee is meeting again tomorrow afternoon, and he asked Mr. Backstrom to check into the matter to ascertain how much money two mills amounted to in dollars. He was in favor of recommending \$250,000 or 2 mills, whichever is the larger amount, he added. Mr. Williams thanked the Council for its kindness in listening to their case and said they hoped Council would see fit to give favorable consideration to their request.

The Library representatives were the next on the Agenda. Wm. P. LeVeque, Library Board member, acted as spokesman in presenting the library's requests and problems to the Council. Before Mr. Le Veque began his presentation, Dr. Humiston read the Finance Committee's recommendation as it pertains to the Public Library as follows: "It is recommended that the allocation to the Library Board shall be the same as last year with the addition of sufficient funds to care for the step increases in the Library pay plan for existing employees." Mr. LeVeque said the Library Board has asked for an increase of \$53,192 over the last budget, \$2,000 of which would be used to increase employees' salaries. They feel this request is justified as their salaries are not equal to other employees, since they were passed by in 1954 and 1955 as far as wage increases were concerned. The present pay scale is too low and consequently it is difficult to obtain qualified librarians. He pointed out that the volume of service has increased from 433,000 in 1953 to 500,000 during first six months of 1955, which is actually an increase of 15%, which makes it obvious that the libraries can't continue to operate on the same amount of money any longer. The answer would have to be a reduction in services, and some of the suggestions made are (1) close main library 5 days a week until 11 P. M.; (2) close branch libraries one day a week and (3) close stations at W. Lishan, 6th Avenue, etc. He pointed out that the Library Board is going to meet again with the school board to see if there can be a joint operation worked out for a library in the west end. Dr. Humiston claimed that the proposed 1956 pay scale for the Library is comparable to other City positions. He pointed out that Seattle spends \$2.58 per capita for libraries, Spokane \$1.45 and Tacoma \$2.95. The Mayor thanked the Library Board for being at the meeting and presenting their problems, and said the Council would act in accordance with their request as nearly as it can be solved with funds available in the Budget. He commended the Library Board on its effort to cooperate with the School District to see if extra services can be made available by joint use of existing facilities.

The Director of Utilities and Utility Board members were called upon in the next order of business. Dr. Humiston read the Finance Committee's recommendation that Hydrant rental be increased from \$50,000 in 1955 Budget to \$80,000 in 1956, and that this item be reviewed annually. Mayor Tollefson said this increase was necessary to bring the financial status of the Water Department into a position where it will be considered favorably by the bond houses in order to make a favorable bond sale. This bond sale is made necessary in order to build an additional reservoir three years ahead of the time contemplated, due to the U. S. Government building Eagle Gorge Dam, he added. Mr. Barline said it had been hoped by the Water Department that the hydrant rental would be upped to \$130,000, the amount recommended by the Gilman Survey. If they don't receive \$130,000 from hydrant rental, they will have to increase rates, but they are hopeful some additional revenue will be derived when the St. Regis contract is renewed, he added.

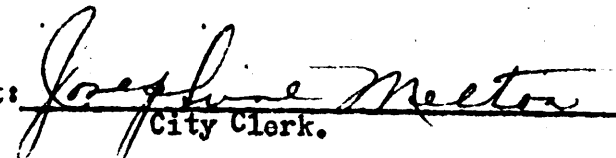
Mr. Barline and Board members were notified of the meeting Thursday night, at which time hearings would be held on salaries and wages. They were unable to attend, Mr. Barline said, due to a prior engagement, but Mr. Garen would represent them at this meeting.

Dr. Humiston suggested that the Council NOT take any action on lump sum requests until the City Manager has given the implications such action would have on the Budget.

It was moved, seconded and carried, that the Budget hearing be continued to Wednesday, October 5th, 1955 at 7:30 P. M.

At 10:20 P. M. upon motion duly seconded and carried Council then recessed to Wednesday, October 5th at 7:30 P. M.

  
President of City Council

Attest:   
City Clerk.