

CITY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING

Thursday, October 10, 1963
City Council Chambers. 7:00 P. M.

Present on roll call 7: Bott, Finnigan, Haley, Herrmann, Murtland, Price and Mayor Tollefson. Mr. Steele arriving at 7:15 P. M. and Mr. Cvitanich at 7:20 P. M.

Mayor Tollefson greeted the audience and said the Council will continue with the budget hearing which was recessed from the meeting of October 9, 1963. ²⁸

Mr. Rowlands explained that the Union representatives are present this evening representing their employee groups. ³⁴

Mr. Newhouse, Joint Labor Committee, was the first to speak and asked the Council if they had committed themselves not to give any wage increase.

Mayor Tollefson replied that the question is still open for discussion as far as the Council was concerned.

Mr. Newhouse asked if the increases that were requested to bring the employees up to the going rate of pay would be granted.

Mr. Rowlands explained that there aren't sufficient funds available to implement the raises suggested by the union.

Mr. Newhouse said if there were funds available in the Utilities Department, he would suggest that the employees be given a raise even though sufficient funds are not available for the General Government employees.

Mayor Tollefson said the policy of the Council has been to have a uniform pay scale regardless of what branch of City Government.

Mr. Clary, representative of the Motor Coach Employees, asked what recommendation has the Council made for an increase for employees of the Transit System.

Mr. Rowlands replied they had recommended a 14¢ an hour increase for Bus operators.

Mr. Clary asked if any increases were contemplated for other classifications.

Mr. Rowlands said the City Council has discussed a one-step range increase in other classifications for all employees where an increase had been recommended regardless of the request.

Mr. Clary said in 1960 it was agreed that wages for Tacoma bus drivers would be adjusted within two or three negotiations to the Seattle driver's scale. This is the fourth negotiation and they are still falling short of Seattle's scale. He compared the rates of pay for bus drivers in Tacoma with other Cities of the Northwest, showing that Tacoma's rate was much lower than other Cities. Tacoma bus operators receive \$2.54 per hour, whereas Seattle operators receive \$2.77 per hour and they are now negotiating for an increase.

He added, the Transit Inspectors have been improperly classified. He felt a two-step range increase is indicated as they should be paid a salary which reflects their skill and responsibility. He further added, the personnel in the Transit System still did not receive the fringe benefits as other City employees. He said unless the City Council adjusts the rates for Tacoma bus drivers and other transit employees to the present Seattle rate, he thought it would be proper to suggest arbitration. He read into the record the arbitration proposal for the Council's serious consideration.

Mayor Tollefson thanked Mr. Clary for his presentation. He said there is no doubt in the Council's mind that the bus drivers should have more wages. He reviewed what the City Council had attempted to do to raise revenue for the City Government. This 14¢ increase would bring the drivers up to \$2.68 per hour and he said Tacoma is trying to catch up with Seattle's wage scale.

Mr. Rowlands asked Mr. Hamilton, Assistant City Attorney, to give a legal opinion regarding the matter of arbitration.

Mr. Hamilton stated, he thought the City Charter had a provision permitting arbitration, the State Supreme Court has ruled it illegal for Councils to delegate this legislative authority.

Mr. Frank Puz, representative of the Machinist Union requested that the machinist be given a full step increase, the same as other employees, rather than a 6¢ per hour increase as proposed.

Mr. Rowlands said, according to the wage survey made by the Personnel Dept. the going rate is \$3.10 per hour, which indicates that Tacoma is paying a higher salary.

Mr. Puz said that there are different types of machinists, as their work varies. He said he had prepared a survey of maintenance machinists of the same firms that are listed in the Personnel Survey and from the survey the median is \$3.34 1/2¢ and the equated average is \$3.26 per hour.

Mr. Bixel explained the procedure in compiling the survey. He stated that in firms having both maintenance and manufacturing machinists, by union agreement they are paid the same rate with no separate classification provided for.

Mr. Willis, representing the Fire Fighters Local, said at the present time their journeymen firemen receive \$2.16 per hour. After obtaining a survey of (17) Cities on the Pacific Coast over 100,000 in population, it is shown that Tacoma Firemen are paid \$1,135 per year below the average salary of a fireman. He added, Tacoma has the lowest paid firemen on the West Coast.

He requested that all personnel of the Fire Department be granted a \$100.00 per month salary increase. He then compared the salaries and the hours of firemen in Seattle and Tacoma, stating, Seattle firemen are being paid higher wages with less hours of duty than Tacoma.

Mr. Willis also requested that a 1 1/2% longevity pay be granted to all personnel of the Fire Department for every five years. For the last (15) years the Firemen have been working a 56 hour week and have been promised shorter hours. He asked if the Council anticipated shorter hours this year.

Mayor Tollefson said the Council had hoped to give the firemen a step and a half increase so as to bring them up to par with other Cities, but again, it is a matter of available funds.

Mr. Kinville, representing the Clerical Local 120, requested a one-step raise be given the Duplicating Machine Operator and Vari-typist. He said this would affect four people and the increase would cost \$80.00 per month.

Mr. James Steele, representing the Police Local 224, asked what the recommendations were for the Police Dept.

Mayor Tollefson said the recommendation was for a 1 1/2 step increase based upon available funds and no recommendation was made regarding longevity pay.

Mr. Steele said the Local is asking for a longevity program of 2%, 4%, 6% and 8% for each five years of service up to 20 years of service. He added, it is a program that is needed for moral and an incentive to stay on the Police force.

In answer to what this would cost the City, Mr. Rowlands, stated it would cost approximately \$52,000 for the Police Dept. only.

Mr. Steele said they felt they were justified in requesting a \$65.00 a month increase across the board, as they did not receive an increase last year. He said due to the low salary, several Patrolmen have resigned from the Police Dept.

Mr. Larimore, representing the Automotive Mechanics, said the City is working under a fleet agreement which covers everything from passenger cars to bulldozers. The going rate in private industry for a fleet mechanic is \$3.25 per hour. The rate that is proposed in this recommendation is also \$3.25. The rate in private industry went into effect last June, whereas, the raise for City employees would not be effective until January 1964, six months later. Then again, machinists in private industry next year will receive another increase.

He thought there should be an adjustment over what has been proposed. A foreman in private industry receives \$3.56 per hour. In the City's proposed increase it is listed as \$3.50 per hour which is 6¢ less.

Mr. Steimack, representing the professional engineers, pointed out that the General Fund is not paying the entire bill for the engineers, 88 to 90% comes from other sources and is included in the contract of the work; it is from grants, bonds, arterials etc. He said City engineer's duties are comparable with the engineers working for the State. He compared the wages, pointing out that the State paid better salaries to their employees. He then compared a few of the classifications between the State and the City affirming the State is paying higher salaries. He asked that the City pay salaries to the engineers equivalent to those paid by the State Highway Dept.

Mr. A. M. Zatkovich, speaking for Local 224, asked what the Police employees would receive in the way of salary increases.

Mayor Tollefson said they would get a one-step increase.

Mr. Steele said they were not happy in receiving only a one-step raise.

Mayor Tollefson explained that the figures that the Manger and staff presented to the Council were on the basis if the City had that amount of money, however, the City did not get as much money as was anticipated from the State. Therefore, the Council could not give a step and a half increase. He added, the Council regrets they cannot give the raises as they were proposed.

Mayor Tollefson again pointed out what the City Council had done in trying to get money for the General Government so that adequate raises could be given to

employees.

Mr. Rowlands said when negotiations were taking place with the groups they talked about the step and a half if the money was forthcoming, consequently, it did not materialize. If a referendum hadn't happened on the Telephone & Gas Tax, the City would have had \$155,000 right now. He added the Council has acted in good faith. Also, the reason for not getting the anticipated \$50,000 from the State liquor taxes, is that it is being used for the rehabilitation of alcoholics.

Mr. Fred Peck, representative of the Teamsters, said in 1961 there was an increase in refuse rates and part of that money was designated for equipment and wages. He said to this date they haven't received the equipment or the raises.

Mr. Peck said, funds are not available in some departments for increases in salaries, other departments have available funds. He felt where funds are available increases should be granted. He asked that they be given an increase to meet the prevailing wage rates for like work.

Mayor Tollefson said that a 4 1/2% increase has been proposed.

Mr. Randy Green requested, where funds are available that a step and one-half increase be given.

Mr. L. Pedersen, Central Labor Council, stated they did not go on record supporting the Council for increased taxes to buy equipment as it is needed for wages.

Mayor Tollefson said the Council supported the taxes for wages, operation and improvements. What share was for wages or plant improvements, he did not know.

Mr. Pedersen said also when the garbage rates were increased the employees were led to believe they would get a raise in wages. It never materialized, he added.

Mr. Pederson also spoke in behalf of the Transit employees, stating they had expected a 17¢ an hour increase with the possibility of another 6¢ in July, which would bring them up to the bus driver's scale in Seattle, bearing in mind that Seattle will be getting an increase in the near future. In 1960 the drivers were assured their scale would be brought up to the Seattle level.

He further asked if City employees would receive a 1/2 step increase in July if the tax referendum was settled by then.

Mayor Tollefson said he couldn't see a decision coming down that fast.

Dr. Herrmann said the Tax Ordinance was not passed for the sole purpose of wages. It was for other areas of the General Fund.

Mr. Ketler asked if it would be legal for the Council to increase wages in mid-year if funds were available next year.

Mr. Hamilton said he was not sure, however, it has been done in other Cities. If it could be established that there was an emergency, it might be accepted as an emergency appropriation.

No one else wishing to speak, the meeting recessed at 12:15 A. M.

Tom Jolly
Mayor of the City Council

Attest: Joelina Metton
City Clerk