

CITY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING

City Council Chambers
Monday, December 6, 1971

The budget hearing reconvened at 7:30 P. M.

Present on roll call - 8: Egan, Jarstad, Maule, Moss, Nalley, Schroeder, Sonntag and Mayor Johnston. Absent - 1: Herrmann.

Mayor Johnston explained that this is the fourth night of the budget hearings as provided by law and that the meetings held last week were set aside for the comments of citizens. Unions representing the employees and other agencies who are dependent upon the City for their financial support will be heard at this meeting. Any other citizen wishing to speak on the issues before the Council may do so at this time.

Tomorrow night's meeting which is the last hearing provided for by law, will be limited to the Finance Director's presentation on the budget. Subsequently, the Council will direct the staff in revising the Preliminary Budget so that a Final Budget can be presented to the City Council by December 14th.

Park Board

Dr. E. E. Banfield, President of the Park Board, gave his report to the Council and stated that the Park Board felt it could abide by all of the recommendations of the City Manager regarding the budget, with the exception of the budget for the Senior Citizens' Center at Wright Park and the budgeted salary for a Recreation Director for the Hilltop area. The Park Department does not have the funds for these two items, which would probably total \$13,000 per year. He asked that the Council consider this addition to the budget. He also asked the Council to consider allowing the Park Department to increase the salaries of all of its employees so as to bring them in line with other City employees. He pointed out that the Park Department plans to have a proposition on the ballot in the Spring of 1972 for the improvement of the sewer system at Point Defiance Park and to acquire some additional land to add to the Park properties. They have some matching funds which could be made available.

Mayor Johnston recommended that the Park Board submit a quarterly report showing how their money is being spent.

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Library Board

Mr. Valen Honeywell, Vice President of the Library Board, reported that the Council had reduced their request for 1971 by \$130,000 and as a result, the Library had already cut back its services. For 1972, the Library Board plans to add five positions and to resume evening operations after the first of the year.

The preliminary budget being presented includes a salary raise of 5%, plus the new employees, the increased employee benefits and increased expenses for books, postage, supplies, etc. He explained that the budget expenses also include an amount required to reline the boilers at the main Library.

Miss Mary Frances Borden further explained the budget figures and reported that there is a \$3,000 to \$4,000 net gain realized from public use of a coin-operated Xerox machine in the Library.

Miss Borden recommended funds be allowed for hiring a Supervisor for Extension Services.

Mr. Honneywell stated that they had researched the availability of federal funds, but it has been determined that these funds are only for "additional services" or for project-type purposes.

Labor Relations

Mr. John Willis, Chairman of the Joint Labor Committee, explained a new fringe benefit "package" for City employees which would include paid family medical coverage. For this coverage the City will pay \$34.10 per employee. However, there will be a \$150 limit on x-ray and diagnostic benefits, a bed rate ceiling of \$56 per day and a deductible. The majority of the Joint Labor Committee had voted to accept the plan for 1972. The total increase in cost to the City for the package will amount to approximately 2% of the City payroll, which would be \$290,000.

Fire and Police Pensions

Mr. John Willis then spoke on behalf of the Firefighters and Policemen's Union and pointed out that they have a separate medical plan and intend to accept the proposal offered to their unions.

Teamsters Union

Mr. Art Rand, representing the Teamsters Union Local #461, pointed out that the City auto mechanics' wages were below other mechanics. The Union had voted, however, to accept the 2% increase offered by the City with the stipulation that if additional funds become available to the City during the year, he would be back to ask for a higher wage for the City mechanics.

Professional & Technical Engineers Local #17

Mr. Ed Calhoun, Professional & Technical Engineers Local #17, representing three groups in the City in the middle management classes, said that their Union had rejected the City's offer as the engineers felt that their pay scale is behind the outside professional engineers' wages. The technicians also felt that they were behind in wage scale and have asked for increases but have been refused. Mr. Calhoun stated that his union had not reached an accord with the City's management team, but would continue to work toward a solution.

Electrical Workers Union

Mr. Ron Miller, representing Electrical Workers Union Local #483, stated that his Union had not yet come to an agreement, but felt they would be able to do so within two weeks. Mr. Donaldson, City Manager, advised that a two-week interim would be too long and that the management team could meet the following morning, December 7th, and report back to the Council at the final budget hearing that evening.

Local #120

Mrs. Lilly Piva, Business Agent for Pierce County & City Employees Local #120, stated that this Union does support the Joint Labor Committee in the aspects of the proposed medical program for the City employees, and has compared the salaries of several City employee classifications with those of Seattle, Pierce County and State employees. They felt that the Tacoma salaries are too low and have requested increases through the management team. Their membership is to meet again at 5:30 on December 7th and will report back to the Council at the next budget hearing meeting.

Local #758

Mr. Bill Hull, representing Motor Coach Employees of the Transit Department, advised the Council that their Union leaders had agreed to accept the medical and wage plan proposed by the City and would present it to their membership in a day or two.

A number of other local Unions were called upon to speak, but had no representatives present.

Humane Society

Mr. Archie Fidler, Executive Director of the Tacoma Humane Society, reported that for the first time in twenty years the Humane Society was not planning to ask for an increase in its budget. The Society has been piloting a membership drive and as a result of additional membership dues and an increased sale of dog licenses, it would not need to ask for additional funds. Their preliminary budget is balanced.

Department of Public Utilities

Mr. A. J. Benedetti, Assistant Director of Public Utilities, advised that the Light Division revenues for the past year would be \$5,000,000 over the 1971 estimates. This is due to increased electrical rates and payments on the Centralia project whereby power is being sold to the Bureau of Reclamation for transfer to California. Mayor Johnston suggested that the Dept. of Public Utilities review the feasibility of placing additional money in their budget for burying the light utilities in areas where there might be an urban arterial project during 1972.

Police Department

Mr. Sonntag made inquiries about the Police Department budget and asked if there is a "supposed" correct number of police officers recommended for the City of Tacoma according to F.B. I. standards. Chief Smith advised that there is no certain standard number for any City, as each city is unique and has its own criteria. He reported that Tacoma's crime picture has leveled off and decreased somewhat, but there is still a problem of increased crime in the City. Police Chief Smith further stated that for each police officer added to the department, it would cost approximately \$14,000 including clothing, training, salary, fringe benefits, pensions, etc., plus \$1,000 for the additional clerical work in the department.

Chief Smith reported on the use of Public Employment Program employees and the use of civilians as jailors for the department.

In reply to Mr. Nalley's question about the new radio communications package, Mr. Donaldson explained that \$123,000 has been budgeted in a reserve fund to begin this project and that it will improve the capabilities of the fire department, the police department and the public works department communications.

Transit System

Mr. Donaldson pointed out that it is estimated the operating expenses of the Transit Department will amount to \$2,878,919, but the revenue is expected to be only \$1,561,900 including the tax being charged to all citizens at present. As a result of the State Legislature Acts recently passed, the City will be able to take in additional money as a result of the 1% State excise tax on motor vehicles. This amount has been included in the budget and will reduce the amount of the City's subsidy to the Transit System.

Fire and Policemen's Pensions

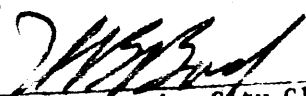
Pursuant to recent State legislation, the retired firemen and policemen are to receive a higher pension than originally funded in the City's pension program. Therefore it is necessary that the City subsidize the fund in order to stay solvent and make the payments required by law.

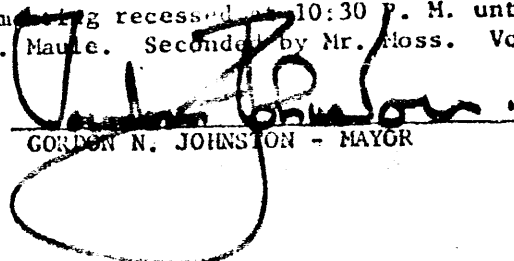
Civil Defense Budget

Mr. Frank Evans, Civil Defense Director, explained that the costs shown in their budget included much-needed repairs and maintenance to the platforms and the air raid sirens which have been in use for twenty years. For this reason their budget is more than double what it was last year even though approximately 50% of the funds for maintenance is received from the federal government.

There being no further business, the meeting recessed at 10:30 P. M. until 7:00 P.M., December 7th, upon motion by Mr. Mauler. Seconded by Mr. Moss. Voice vote carried.

Attest:


H. B. Bond - City Clerk


GORDON N. JOHNSTON - MAYOR