

431

CITY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING

494

Wednesday, October 5, 1966
City Council Chambers, 7:00 P.M.

Present on roll call 8: Cvitanich, Finnigan, Haley, Herrmann, Johnson, Murtland, Price and Mayor Tollefson. Absent 1: Bott.

Mayor Tollefson announced that this is the third hearing on the Budget for 1967.

Mayor Tollefson called on Mr. John Willis, President of Local No. 31, Fire Fighters' Union, as well as the Chairman of the Joint Labor Committee, who spoke for both organizations.

Mr. Willis listed a three point program relative to the city employees wages and conditions.

1. A flat amount across-the-board increase for all city employees.
2. Family medical coverage paid for by the City.
3. Four hour minimum on call back for all city employees.

He stated that the Seattle firemen work fewer hours at higher pay than Tacoma firemen. He added he wished that the City Council would give serious consideration to the Committee's request.

Mr. Marvin Dillashaw representing the Tacoma Police Local #224 said that increases in pay for policemen should be greater if the city expects to compete with Seattle, Bellevue and Renton for police recruits. He recommended that the Council upgrade the requirements for police patrolmen to include a minimum of two years of college, and that a \$150.00 per month pay increase be allowed for all police personnel.

Mr. Rowlands explained that a four step range would be considered rather than the five step which is now in the recommended budget.

Mr. Lauren Bair, representing the operating engineers, informed the Council that Tacoma will lose more employees to Seattle because the recommended increases for operating engineers are not as high. The bridge tenders, boiler inspectors and sewermen have extremely low salaries. He recommended a \$50.00 per month salary increase for these categories.

Mr. Rowlands explained that the State Highway Department reimburses the City for the bridge tender's salaries. However, two groups of bridge tenders had to be taken into consideration; the Seattle tenders are paid more, but the other groups in the State are receiving considerably less. He asked that Mr. Bair explain this situation.

Mr. Bair stated that the bridge tenders for the City of Tacoma working at the Hylebos bridge are under an extreme handicap as they are working five days a week at \$3.08 an hour. The Port Industrial bridge closes at 3:00 P.M. However, the three men at the Hylebos bridge work on a standby basis and sometimes on their day off they are called back to work which actually makes them work seven days a week as they cannot leave town.

Mayor Tollefson asked that information on the bridge tenders salaries and hours be submitted to the Council for Thursday's meeting.

Mr. Frank Meisenberg, representing the electrical workers, urged that meter readers be taken out of the Clerical series and put in with the Trades series to pave the way for better wage opportunities.

Mr. Al Benedetti, Assistant Director of Utilities, stated they felt that the request by Mr. Meisenberg to transfer the meter readers out of the Clerical series is justified. However, the other salaries in the Utility Department compare favorably with Seattle.

Mr. Finnigan asked if extra duties have been placed upon the water and meter readers.

Mr. Benedetti stated that over the years the increased services, lines etc. have been taken care of by the same number of employees, and it is true that additional territory has been added which is impossible to cover during an 8-hour day, but there is a great turnover. The Department is interested in a permanent, dependable employee because they do deal with the public while covering their territories.

Mr. Raley asked if this was a training ground for other positions.

Mr. Benedetti explained that it is a potential recruitment and training ground for positions in the controller's division, however, there are not a great number of those positions.

Mr. Finnigan asked how many men are in this category.

Mr. Benedetti said there are 14 meter readers and 6 field investigators and one supervisor.

Mayor Tollefson stated as these meter readers or even field investigators move to better employment, would they consider it as being a defect in the pay plan.

Mr. Benedetti remarked that these are important functions within the department but they would like to think that it is not a training ground for other positions, but since dependability is required, this, of course, makes for a better position.

Over the years the wage scale for meter readers has been lower than other areas. However, over the past three years the salary has picked up one-half step.

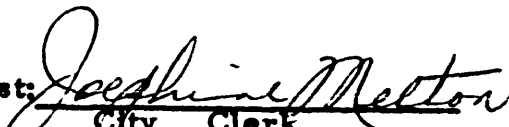
Mayor Tollefson asked that Mr. Rowlands, City Manager, and Mr. Erdahl, Utilities Director, make a careful study of costs in regard to fringe benefits for family medical coverage for consideration by the Council next year. He added the Council faces a constant struggle to find money for wages to which it believes city employees are entitled.

Mayor Tollefson read a letter from Beulah Buss, P. H. N., Chairman of the Economic Security Unit Nurses, P.C.H.D., thanking the Council for hearing their views at Tuesday's Council hearing on the 1967 budget.

The budget hearing was recessed until Thursday, October 6th at 7:00 P.M.



Mayor of the City Council

Attest: 

City Clerk