

CITY COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING

City Council Chambers
Thursday, December 3, 1970.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:00 P.M. and called to order by Mayor Johnston.

All members present.

Mayor Johnston announced that this was the third meeting of the budget hearings for 1971.

He asked if there were any public citizens who had not spoken previously, who wished to speak at this time.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Mr. Walter Gordon, Chairman of the Budget Committee for Friends of the Tacoma City Library, requested the Council to act favorably in regard to the Library budget. He pointed out that many library projects, such as rebinding, have been deferred in preference to other City projects. He explained the group he represents is a new organization being formed to perform library work not otherwise accomplished by hired personnel. The work of this group includes collections and the purchasing of books not otherwise budgeted by the Library.

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METROPOLITAN PARK BOARD

Mayor Johnston said that the Metropolitan Park Department budget would be taken up at this time.

Mr. Omar Bratrud, Vice-chairman of the Park Board, commented that three members of the Park Department were present to answer questions by the Council.

Mrs. Egan asked if the Park Board advertises for bids when a purchase is necessary for their department.

Mr. Bratrud said they do advertise on larger items, but they use the City purchasing agent on smaller items. He then asked the status of the Park Dept. budget request in the sum of \$963,812, which did not include any pay increases for the department employees other than a few step-raises which had already been included in the budget.

Mayor Johnston said this subject had been discussed in executive session just prior to the meeting and would be reviewed again later in the evening. He added there was some discussion on the matter of providing methods of revenue programs for the Park Dept. which the Park Board had been considering.

Mr. Bratrud said one of the major problems was the sewer system at Point Defiance Park, and that the Park District would not be capable of financing such a project. He said the Park District would like to construct a new sewer system but it would cost \$500,000, minus whatever funds could be obtained from some federal agency. The only other way the City could ever put in the sewer would be to put a proposition on the ballot for additional millage, or to charge an admission into the Park to help supplement the Park's general budget and then use that as a financing agent to finance the \$500,000. He asked what the Council's reaction would be to charging a fee to enter the Park.

Mr. Maule suggested perhaps there could be one half day each week when ad-

mission could be free for those who could not afford to pay to enter the park at other times.

Mr. Bratrud pointed out that the heavy periods are on week ends and normally the majority of visitors at that time are from outside the City and are not taxpayers, and are not supporting the park in any way. Whereas, if a fee were charged, the revenue could be derived from everyone going into the Park. He said he had discussed this previously with various groups and not met with much opposition to a charge. He felt it would not be unjust to make a charge, especially as Point Defiance Park has so many features to offer the public.

Mr. Jarstad said this subject had been brought up last year and the question was whether the charge should be only on cars entering the park or for pedestrians as well.

Discussion was held relative to a salary for personnel making the collections of a fee, and it was suggested perhaps the handicapped persons could perform this duty and receive a certain percentage of the entry fee. Thereby the Park Board would not have to pay the salary.

Mr. Schroeder asked what the annual revenue would amount to if there were an annual charge of \$2.00 for each car.

Mr. Bratrud replied the Park Board would hope to receive at least \$150,000 per year in revenue by this method.

Mrs. Egan felt this would not be a proper practice, as the parks belong to the people and there is very little other recreation available to the citizens with low incomes.

Mr. Corsi asked how far along the Park Board has gone in its pursuit of federal funds, which has been indicated as a possibility for such a project.

Mr. Bratrud said a study was made and the engineers had designed a plan which was presented to the HUD agency. If there are funds available from HUD, it looked as though it might cost the Park Board only \$250,000 instead of the \$500,000; however, at the last meeting of the Board they were advised that the particular HUD funds had been withdrawn. Therefore, it could cost the Park Board somewhere between \$400,000 to \$500,000 if the federal funds are not available. The \$500,000 figure was the estimate, and the amount received from any state or federal agency would be deducted from that.

Mr. Corsi said the reason he is concerned is that the information he had received is that those funds could be available again at this time, and he is wondering if Mr. Bratrud would not assume that at the moment this is possible.

Mr. Bratrud said he would let Mr. Glundberg answer that particular question because it was his own understanding that some \$140,000 had "disappeared."

Mr. William Glundberg, Director of the Park Dept., explained that the department is not pursuing the matter as there has to be matching funds before they can do anything. If they do not first have the local matching funds to operate, there would be no use to attempt to get federal or state funds. He said they were not pursuing these funds at the moment as they had been notified last week that an amount of \$116,000, which had been anticipated toward the project, was not eligible under the criteria set forth by HUD for this particular project.

Mayor Johnston said it is evident that study sessions should be held concerning special areas such as boat lockers and higher fees on special park picnics. He commented that a charge to the public might not be the best solution, but that special charges for special services might be a feasible arrangement.

Mr. Bratrud said the Board will advise the Council before making any anticipated changes.

Mr. Maule asked if improvement to Lincoln Park, Salishan and other parks is included in the present budget, and further if it is planned to improve the parks to a greater degree to accommodate the handicapped persons.

Mr. Bratrud advised that a considerable amount of funds had been spent on Lincoln Park two years ago, but under the present budget only the present recreation program could be allowed, with no additions. He added there was special millage available that was spent for improvements that had been made.

Mr. Finnigan asked what is the status of the Hilltop Area, and also how the Park Dept. plans to utilize the school playgrounds.

Mr. Bratrud said a lease is being negotiated with the Boys Club of America under which a large building will be constructed at McCarver School to house a gymnasium, and a swimming pool, and there will be ball grounds included. This will help solve limitations in the Hilltop Area.

Mr. Finnigan asked when that project would be developed.

Mr. Bratrud said it should be under construction during 1971.

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The Council recessed at 8:15 and reconvened at 8:35 P.M.

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STATEMENT BY MAYOR

Mayor Johnston announced that the Council had devoted considerable time and study to the City Budget and it is now at a point where the Council could approve of the 1971 budget totals. All department totals reflect the austerity necessary in order to provide for a continuation of essential services in the community. The matter of wages and fringe benefits to City employees had been of utmost concern to the Council. The Council has studied and considered the recommendations of the management team and met in executive session with the Joint Labor Council as well as consulting with four employee groups. He added they have now reached a determination which the Council believes fair to the employees and to the citizens of the community, who are the beneficiaries of City services.

The recommendation which the Council will be approving for inclusion in the 1971 budget will basically provide for a 5% salary increase for all employee categories, plus an increase of \$1.67 in the amount to be paid per employee for health and welfare benefits. With the implementation of these recommendations the Council believes that the combination of salary and fringe benefits will adequately maintain prevailing area rates.

If this meets with the Council's approval, the Mayor requested that the City Manager and the Director of Utilities draft a Compensation Plan providing for such increases and excluding such employee groups as have now, or may hereafter indicate non-acceptance of this salary proposal. For these employee groups the salaries presently in force are to be retained until such time as mediation, or such other appeals are completed. Thereafter such recommendations as may be agreed upon, if any, would be considered for adoption by the Council.

Mayor Johnston remarked that this has been a most difficult budget year, with the status of the economy in the area and the very severe problems which are facing this City and all cities today. The Council has appreciated the understanding,

cooperation, loyalty and hard work of the very fine cadre of City employees in the City of Tacoma. With the adoption of this budget and with the same cooperation and excellent services which the employees had provided in the past, can be expected in the future.

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SUMMARY

Mayor Johnston then asked Mr. Gaisford, Finance Director, to give the breakdown of the changes to be made in the budget.

Mr. Gaisford said he has kept track of the recommended changes or amendments for the 1971 preliminary budget as adopted on October 27, 1970, and requested the Council to adopt these changes which had been agreed upon during the last three days of budget hearings.

These changes are as follows: to increase the revenues in the General Fund through the Light Dept. gross earnings tax, the Water Dept. gross earnings tax, and the Belt Line Railway gross earnings tax, in the total sum of \$298,050.

Increases in Expenditures budgeted will be as follows:

Tacoma Humane Society	\$ 5,500	City Street Fund	\$50,000
Police Department	320	(Roadway Dept.)	
Belt Line Railway	187,000	Trainee Corps	40,000
City Street Fund (Traffic Signal Dept.)	7,040	Human Relations Dept.	23,000

Decreases in Expenditures will be as follows:

Equipment Rental Fund	\$ 50,000
Library Appropriation	132,745
Park Board	5,847

The Total Final Budget for the City for the year 1971 will be \$80,640,292.

Mr. Finnigan moved to adopt this budget for 1971 with the stated changes. Seconded by Dr. Herrmann. A voice vote was taken, and carried.

The budget was declared adopted.

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Mr. McCormick recommended that the Council also adopt, by motion, all of the policies and directions as set forth in the statement read by the Mayor, and that the minutes show, verbatim, the adoption of the budget.

Mr. Finnigan so moved. Seconded by Dr. Herrmann. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried.

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ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Corsi moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Finnigan. A voice vote was taken, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Attest: 
Josephine Melton - City Clerk


Gordon N. Johnston - Mayor