

July 28, 1953

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE CITY HALL
ON TUESDAY JULY 28, 1953 AT 9:00 A.M.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Henry B. Gonzalez.

PRESENT: Scherlen, Stevens, Shearer, R. N. White, Easley, Lester, Gonzalez;

ABSENT: A. C. White, Russell.

INVOCATION: Rev. John Daniel Brown

The Clerk read the Call of the Meeting as follows:

Mr. J. Frank Gallagher
City Clerk
San Antonio, Texas

Dear Sir:

Under authority vested in me by the Charter of the City, I hereby request that you call a Special Meeting of the City Council, required for the good of the City of San Antonio and to consider a Public Assistance Program, to convene at 9:00 A.M. on the 28th day of July, 1953 in the Council Chamber of the City Hall of the City of San Antonio.

Yours very truly,

/s/ Henry B. Gonzalez
Mayor Pro-Tem

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Council
City of San Antonio, Texas

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to a written request filed by Mayor Pro-Tem Henry B. Gonzalez you are hereby called into a Special Session of the City Council to be held in the City Council Chamber in the City Hall at 9:00 A.M. on the 28th day of July 1953 to consider a public assistance program.

Respectfully,

/s/ J. Frank Gallagher
City Clerk.

Receipt of notice of above Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of San Antonio is hereby acknowledged.

<u>/s/ R. L. Lester</u>	<u>/s/ Emil O. Scherlen</u>
<u>/s/ Thelma Stevens</u>	<u>/s/ Raymond R. Russell, Jr.</u>
<u>/s/ Ralph V. Easley</u>	<u>/s/ H. J. Shearer</u>
<u>/s/ R. N. White Jr.</u>	<u>/s/ Henry B. Gonzalez</u>

After a brief discussion it was decided that the proponents of the matter of creating a Department of Public Assistance should open the discussion to be followed by the opponents, each to have an equal amount of time.

Mr. Gunther Orsinger opened the discussion with the statement that relief work has reached such stupendous proportions that the private agencies cannot cope with it and they are compelled to look to the government for lightening of the load.

His Organization, the Community Chest is making proposals as follows:

PROPOSALS TO THE SAN ANTONIO CITY COUNCIL

The following proposals are presented in behalf of the aged, the chronically ill, the permanently handicapped, and otherwise needy residents of San Antonio and also the charitable agencies of our community and approximately 100,000 contributors who provide the funds for their assistance.

1. We appear to report that the number of such needy residents and the amount of their needs have reached such proportions that they can no longer be dealt with adequately by voluntary contributions

July 28, 1953

raised through the Community Chest. Contrary to normal experience, the number of person in need of assistance has continued to mount through the summer months. Budgeted for use for this purpose by the family service agencies of the Chest is an amount of \$228,000 as of the beginning of this year. Due to the increasing numbers in need of help the Board of Directors of the Community Chest has found it necessary during the first 6½ months to expend more than \$30,000 in excess of this budgeted amount.

2. The heart of the problem confronting needy persons and the charitable agencies of San Antonio is the fact that neither the City of San Antonio nor Bexar County are equipped to appropriate and administer local tax funds to care for the chronically ill and long-time or permanently needy persons of this community. Although this is a responsibility that is assumed by local governments elsewhere the charitable agencies in San Antonio have accepted this responsibility and have been able to meet it with reasonable adequacy during recent years of high prosperity. In order to care for such person, however, the resources of these agencies have been spread exceedingly thin. We have now reached a time when such persons are absorbing the full resources of the agencies and are leaving no funds with which to meet the short-time emergency needs of families in which there is illness or other reasons requiring assistance.

3. It is the proposal of this committee that the City Council establish the necessary machinery for the administration of local tax funds and consider the appropriation of such funds and their administration as a normal activity of the government.

Such action would be in line with the established practice of other large cities and the counties of this state and throughout the nation. In the city of Houston, for the current year for instance, \$387,000 has been appropriated for this purpose for 1953. In Dallas, \$180,000 has been appropriated for this purpose. In Addition there has been appropriated by Harris County \$193,000 and by Dallas County \$180,000 for this general family assistance and welfare work. The Community Chests in the same cities are providing through voluntary charitable agencies for the short-time emergency kind of assistance amounts that are approximately double the grants now being provided the agencies in San Antonio and which in this community must care for all persons in need of care.

4. We do not propose that tax funds be appropriated to the Community Chest or to any of its member agencies. We do request that in line with the established traditions of local government throughout the country and in line with the authority placed upon you under the city charter of San Antonio, that you establish as part of the city government the machinery that you may find necessary to deal with the needs of the needy residents of this community and that the needs of these person be given consideration as you plan your budget and your administration of the other responsibilities of the city government. We have drawn up for you consideration ordinances which define the categories of of person whose care is a proper responsibility of local government and also for the establishment of a department through which such care can be administered.

July 28, 1953.

Mr. Orsinger then presented Rabbi David Jacobson, representing the Community Welfare Council, who said that San Antonio is the only city of over 100,000 residents in the country which does not have a public welfare agency.

He was followed by Mr. David Thrift, representing the Family Welfare Association, and who stated that his organization was being overtaxed and its budget would not meet the demand.

Rev. Paul Ehlinger, head of the Catholic Welfare organization followed and cited cases which show what a drain is being made upon their funds by increased population.

Mr. D. G. Williams, a Chest director, speaking for the Railroad unions also showed what private organizations were doing. They cannot understand why San Antonio has fallen so far behind in care for the needy.

Mr. Alonzo Perales speaking for Guadalupe Center read an editorial from the Alamo Register entitled, "The Show Down".

Mr. Robert D. O'Callaghan, spoke for the Salvation Army, stating that their load is becoming larger and larger.

Mr. Theo Weiss summarized the case for Public Assistance and assured the Council that unless action is take people will starve.

Rev. John Daniel Brown, of Harlandale Baptist Church, speaking for fifty Baptist churches in San Antonio stated he was firmly opposed to any such methods as it was strictly socialistic. First, the City does not have the money. Second, This is an economy administration. Third, The whole plan is to get a foot in the door. Sixth, All cities do not have such plans, Seventh, 9% of our contributions to the Community Chest go for overhead. He recommended that we get out and raise the money by popular subscription.

July 28, 1953

249
~~633~~

Mr. John C. Hoyo, President of the Tax Payers League of San Antonio, said the whole problem is shall we embark on a new and untried policy for San Antonio. He stated that the acts contemplated would be unconstitutional and he cited many legal cases and points. He stated that if this plan was started in a matter of 5 year the city would have the whole thing on its hands and the Community Chest and such would have shifted the entire burden. .

Mr. Robert Duncan then spoke as a private individual as did his wife.

Mr. Thurman Barrett said that he believed that the people representing the proponents were more from Terrell Hills, Alamo Heights and Olmos Park than from the City. He said the municipalities should be compelled to do their part before San Antonio as a City is called upon.

Mrs. Henrietta Pyle spoke against the proposition and she put it "in defense of the little home owners."

Mr. Weiss then spoke in rebuttal and said there was no politics and no bigotry in their plan and no hard feeling.

Mr. Borwn said this proposal if adopted would become an octopus on the body politic.

Mr. Scherlen then moved that the Council take the matter under advisement and study it thoroughly before any further action is taken. The motion was unanimously carried.

Mr. Scherlen then moved that the Council adjourn and the motion was carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

Henry B. Gonzalez
MAYOR

ATTEST:

Kraus Ballou
City Clerk.