

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO, HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, ON
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1989.

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The meeting was called to order by the presiding officer, Mayor Henry Cisneros, with the following members present: BERRIOZABAL, WEBB, DUTMER, WING, MARTINEZ, THOMPSON, VERA, WOLFF, LABATT, HASSLOCHER, CISNEROS. Absent: NONE.

89-09

COUNCIL PAY RAISE ISSUE

Mayor Cisneros stated that the Special City Council meeting was called to consider two subjects: increased pay for City Council members and the financing of the new main library project. He distributed a copy of information put together by City staff relative to comparing City Council compensation in San Antonio with other selected cities, a copy of which is made a part of the papers of this meeting. He stated that he believes that \$20 per meeting for San Antonio City Council members is too low and cited cost of living increases of more than three-fold since the Charter was written in 1951. He also noted that adoption of the districting method of Council representation also has brought about the full time nature of City Council membership, and spoke in favor of having Council compensation raised to \$400 per meeting, despite his feeling that this would not survive a citizen referendum in light of the recent Congressional pay raise matter. He recommended that the Council have an externally-appointed Charter Revision Commission named to study the matter and put it before the voters, untouched by the Council. In summary, Mayor Cisneros recommended that the Council not go forward seeking a Charter change and a pay raise at this time.

Mr. Thompson spoke in agreement with the Mayor, stating that he feels that the public mood has been firmly established by the recent Congressional pay raise matter. He stated his preference for handling a Council pay raise matter away from the matter of re-election, such as in the upcoming May elections. He also spoke against appointment of a Charter Revision Commission.

Mr. Wolff noted his belief that the Council pay raise issue could possibly damage the library issue on the May ballot, and stated his contention that the public does not fully understand the matter of Council expense allowances.

Mr. Labatt noted that, in his opinion, charter revision is long overdue, but stated that the law only allows a charter change election every two years and expressed concern to the need for such an election in

1991 relating to redistricting. He spoke in favor of naming a Charter Revision Commission to begin work on the issues, and voiced opposition to raising Council pay at this time.

Ms. Berriozabal stated that she wants to hear from the citizens on just how much time they feel that a Council member should put into City government, on the job. She spoke in support of a Charter Revision Commission to look into just what the people expect and determine what they are willing to pay for that expectation. She noted that few people can afford to serve on the City Council, as it is now, and submitted for the record a letter from the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education fund relating to the issue of pay for Council members, a copy of which is made a part of the papers of this meeting.

Mr. Hasslocher stated that he cannot support increased pay for Council members at this time, and hoped that the next City Council, elected in May, might put together a Charter Revision Commission to look into it. He agreed with Mr. Wolff on the adverse impact the pay raise issue might have on library financing on the same election ballot.

Mrs. Dutmer noted that she always has been opposed to increased pay for Council members, and stated her feeling that Council members are liaison between City government and its citizens. She stated that she fears more bureaucracy could be caused by increased pay for Council members.

Mr. Webb spoke in favor of increased pay for Council members, noting his longtime support of this issue. He spoke of the long hours of work put in by Council members, and stated that the small pay involved restricts many from seeking Council posts.

Ms. Vera noted that the 1985 City Council had agreed to appoint a Charter Revision Commission but never did so. She spoke in favor of having this done.

Mr. Wing spoke against the pay increase idea and appointing a Charter Revision Commission. He spoke against charter changes, stating his feeling that some Council members seem to be using the pay issue to underlay an assault on the districting system for the City Council.

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89-09

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT ROLLS

Mayor Cisneros stated that for the past six months he has been meeting with representatives of the East Central and Southside Independent School Districts concerning the growing amounts of land being removed from their taxable assessment rolls. He stated that he would like for representatives of the two districts to come before City Council to tell their stories on the same date that Council is due to consider the matter

of a landfill for the south side. He noted that he now is circulating a memorandum, seeking six Council signatures to cause this appearance to occur.

89-09

LIBRARY ISSUE

Mayor Cisneros noted that the matter of site selection for a possible new main library has gone forward without the funds available to finance it. He stated his belief that a tax increase is not a realistic proposal to solve this matter. He spoke of the need to set up a plan to ask the citizens their feelings about a bond issue to finance library needs, yet at the same time not damaging the bond requirements for streets and drainage work. Mayor Cisneros distributed a packet of information labelled "Financial Needs", a copy of which is made a part of the papers of this meeting.

Mayor Cisneros noted that the library system's five-year plan includes some \$28 million for a main library and expansion of branch libraries, a package totalling some \$40,653,000. He stated his contention that the Council needs to put out this library package for bond issue approval or face the prospect of pitting library needs against streets and drainage in the future. He stated his belief that the citizens will support bonds for needed library improvements, and recommended that the City Council study possible improvements to the present main library building along with the six other recommended library sites; then, the next City Council should decide upon the main library location issue. He also noted that adoption of a library bond issue would free some \$3.3 million which has been set aside for library needs in the cable television settlement. He urged the Council to go forward with the library bond issue on the May election ballot. He also spoke of the possibility that the Council might wish to consider bonds for literacy centers, as well. He asked that the May ballot provision on library bonds be generic enough so as not to restrict funding to individual projects.

(At this point, Mayor Cisneros was obliged to leave the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Webb presided.)

Mr. Thompson stated that he personally has a problem with voting for funds for the library without knowing first which site is being funded. He stated that, to him, the matter of site selection is paramount and should come first, then the financing.

(At this point, Mayor Cisneros returned to the meeting to preside.)

Mr. Labatt provided Council members with a packet of materials, a copy of which is made a part of the papers of this meeting. He offered a four-point program to help in solving the library funding problems,

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including (1) inclusion of \$1 million in increased sales tax revenue to be earmarked for the library needs for FY 1989-90; (2) prioritization of the general fund monies to guarantee that the aforementioned \$1 million does not cause a property tax increase; (3) selection of the new library director; and (4) increase library revenues from suburban cities in Bexar County who utilize the library system.

Mr. Labatt stated that he feels that the library bond issue should be taken to the citizens only after the library's operating budget is sufficiently funded, and he spoke to the need for better library staff, more books and better services as a higher priority with him than additional space. He stated that as a result, he would be voting against a library bond issue for the May ballot and would support more funds for library staff, books and services.

Ms. Vera stated that she feels that the library system has been shortchanged, and expressed her belief that the citizens would support a tax increase to bring the library system up to par. She spoke in favor of adding the library matter to the May election ballot and addressed the need to look at the city's literacy problems, as well, perhaps adding this matter to the bond issue for May. She then detailed the plans for 10 literacy centers in San Antonio and the fact that it will cost some \$5.8 million to fund the entire planned network of literacy centers. She then spoke of her willingness to consider funding half that amount at this time.

Mr. Louis J. Fox, City Manager, noted that \$5.8 million in bonds represents about one-fourth-cent in the tax rate.

Ms. Joan Mellard, Chairperson of the Library Board of Trustees, noted that the Board has considered expansion of branch libraries to encompass "learning centers", and she further stated her belief that the citizens would support bonds for the library system.

Ms. Patricia Ozuna, co-chair, Communities Organized for Public Service, read from a prepared statement in support of expansion of the present main library and library branches, including construction of two new branches as proposed. She also spoke in support of having literacy centers be a part of the bond package.

Mr. Randy Harig, Chairman, Centro 21, agreed to the need for balance in the entire process, and spoke in support of the proposed bond issue on libraries.

Mrs. Dutmer quoted from a memorandum from her personal files on the need to identify funding mechanisms for library improvements, and spoke in support of a bond issue or use of Certificates of Obligation for such funding, thus freeing the set-aside funds from the cable television settlement for use in streets and drainage work. She then addressed several possible scenarios.

Mr. Wolff spoke in favor of holding the matter of the main library sitting in abeyance until funding mechanisms are in place. He also spoke in favor of using a tax increase to fund library improvements, and spoke in support of the bond issue idea, as well.

Ms. Berriozabal spoke in favor of going forward on library improvements, and in favor of completing the entire literacy center package at this time. She asked for support for this idea from those groups who organized to support the domed stadium matter recently.

Mr. Wing spoke in favor of letting the citizens decide the issue.

Mr. Martinez spoke in support of the bond issue, including the matter of the literacy centers.

A discussion then took place concerning the costs for learning centers and their possible inclusion in branch libraries, as well as the funding being a part of the bond issue matter.

Mr. Webb urged that the citizens be allowed to vote on the library issue.

Mrs. Dutmer made a motion to bring forward to the "A" Session the matter of placing the library bond matter on the May 6, 1989 election ballot. Mr. Webb seconded the motion.

The motion prevailed by the following vote: AYES: Berriozabal, Webb, Dutmer, Martinez, Thompson, Vera, Wolff, Hasslocher, Cisneros; NAYS: Labatt; ABSENT: Wing.

Mr. Ken Daly, Director of Budget & Research, addressed the individual facets of the \$40,653,000 bond issue proposal for library improvements, extracted from Page 1 of the "Financial Needs" handout provided by Mayor Cisneros. He also addressed inclusion of some \$5,808,000 in the bond issue for eight literacy centers, noting that two literacy centers already are open or nearing completion. He addressed the total proposed bond package of \$46,461,000, and estimated that the bond package will require an additional tax increase of 1 1/2 cents for the library system and 1/4 cent to fund the literacy centers work.

Mayor Cisneros asked individual Council members to make personal contact with representatives of the various Chambers of Commerce and other community groups this week, in order to solicit their support for the bond issue package. He also asked that three Council members call upon the editorial boards of the two daily newspapers to solicit their support, as well.

There being no further business to come before the City Council,
the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

A P P R O V E D

Henry Cisneros

M A Y O R

ATTEST: *James S. Rodriguez*
City Clerk