

P U B L I C   N O T I C E

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

10:00 A.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT  
CITY HALL

Public Hearing:

Initiative Ordinance Petition concerning minimum number of  
Firemen and Resolution providing for August 8, 1981 Election.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the above notice of meeting was posted on  
the bulletin board at the City Hall of the City of Abilene, Texas,  
on the 2nd day of July, 1981, at 10:00 o'clock A.M.

*Kelly Brewer, Assistant*  
City Secretary

CHAMBER OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL, THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS.

The City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas, met in Special Session Wednesday, July 8, 1981, at 10:00 a.m., with Mayor Elbert E. Hall present and presiding. Councilmen Dick Bowen, Juan C. Rodriguez, A. E. Fogle, Jr. and L.D. Hilton present. Councilman Seaton Higginbotham & Councilwoman Kathy Webster absent. City Manager Ed Seegmiller, City Attorney Harvey Cargill and City Secretary Ruth Hodgkin present.

The City Secretary placed in front of the Council her certification that the Proposed Initiative Ordinance Petition has sufficient number of qualified voters' signatures and that a proper affidavit is attached to it.

Mayor Hall read the Proposed Ordinance which the Firemen had submitted:

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS, THAT FORTHWITH, FROM THE DATE OF ENACTMENT OF THIS ORDINANCE THE MINIMUM MANNING LEVEL FOR THE ABILENE FIRE DEPARTMENT SHALL EQUAL OR SURPASS ONE AND ONE-HALF (1.5) FULL-TIME AND FULLY PAID, TRAINED AND CERTIFIED, PROFESSIONAL, FIRE SUPPRESSION, CIVIL SERVICE FIRE FIGHTERS PER EVERY ONE THOUSAND (1,000) POPULATION OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, WHICH POPULATION SHALL BE OFFICIALLY DETERMINED, CALCULATED, AND STIPULATED ANNUALLY BY THE CITY OF ABILENE, FOR PURPOSES OF THIS ORDINANCE, THE TERM "CERTIFIED" SHALL REFER TO FIRE FIGHTER PERSONNEL WHO MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION AS STIPULATED BY THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION PERSONNEL STANDARDS AND EDUCATION. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS ORDINANCE, THE TERM "FIRE SUPPRESSION" SHALL REFER TO FIRE FIGHTER PERSONNEL WHO STAY AT FIRE STATIONS FOR TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOUR SHIFTS, WHO MAN FIRE APPARATUS, WHO RESPOND TO DESIGNATED ALARMS FOR HIS APPARATUS, AND WHO ACTUALLY PERFORMS FIRE FIGHTING ACTIVITIES.

Mayor Hall opened public hearing on the above Proposed Ordinance.

Oliver Howard, 1151 Elmwood Drive, said that when he was Mayor, they found that the City of Abilene was spending more money than other cities its size, for the Fire Department. It was then found that Scottsdale, Arizona, a city about the size of Abilene, was operating their fire department for about a million and one half dollars a year less than what our operation was running. Now, since the firemen have presented their petition, the Council does not have any choice but to call an election to let the voters decide what they want. But he said he was opposed to the proposed increase in personnel, because very few cities in the State our size, have the proposed ratio of firemen.

John Bogart, Captain in the Fire Department, said that the cost for the increase in personnel would run right at 7½ cents per person per day for the citizens of Abilene.

Mayor Hall expressed his appreciation to the firemen, for getting the petitions in the shape where they could be verified without too much trouble by the Staff.

George Black, Co-owner of Black & Goble Construction Company, and a Fireman, spoke of the hazards that the men on the Abilene Fire Department have compared to the City of Scottsdale, Arizona.

Tom Goble, Firefighter, brought out the cost of putting the LFWF plan into effect. He said that they had found some defaults in the LFWF report, and did not feel that it would be economical to use the volunteer fire support specialists in this program.

Abe Allen, 1444 Tanglewood, said that he was very much opposed to having our council shackled with inflexible numbers that they would have no control over. It would be a burden on the tax payers of this community, he pointed out.

Curtis Hawk, Assistant City Manager, pointed out that the passage of the ordinance as worded would require hiring 39 to 40 additional people immediately, to bring the department level up to 165.

Captain Bogart said that the national manning average is 1.67 per 1,000 population.

Mr. Hawk said that the 1.67 figure is misleading because some states require 40 hour work weeks for their firemen, while Abilene firefighters work 56 hour weeks. A recent survey of the 18 largest cities in Texas found the average manning level to be 1.4 per 1,000, he said, and the median to be 1.37.

Mr. Cargill, City Attorney, advised the Council that his research shows no clear answer as to the means of repealing any initiative ordinance passed by voters. He said that it probably would require litigation to settle, if the issue came up.

There being no one else present and desiring to speak, Mayor Hall closed the public hearing.

Councilman Bowen moved adoption of the Resolution Ordering an Initiative Ordinance Election to be held August 8, 1981. The motion was seconded by Councilman Fogle. The motion carried as follows:

AYES: Councilmen Bowen, Rodriguez, Fogle, Hilton and Mayor Hall.  
NAYS: None.

  
CITY SECRETARY

  
MAYOR