

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 24, 197212TH BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVESSTAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

A Special Meeting of the Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford was held on Tuesday, October 24, 1972 pursuant to a "Call" from Mayor Julius M. Wilensky, in the Meeting Room of the Board, 2nd floor, Municipal Office Building, 429 Atlantic Street, Stamford, Connecticut.

In the absence of the President, George V. Connors, Anthony D. Truglia, Majority Leader, called the Meeting to order at 10:00 P.M. after an Open Caucus Session. Those present to answer questions were Mayor Julius Wilensky, State Transportation Commissioner Mr. Earl Wood, Attorney Robert Bromley, Corporation Counsel, Attorney Ronald Schwartz, Assistant Corporation Counsel, and Mr. Ronald Weber, City Traffic Director.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG: Anthony Truglia led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL was taken by the Clerk. There were 32 present and 8 absent at the calling of the roll. The absent Members were:

Stephen E. Kelly (D) - 4th District
 Philip J. Gambino (D) - 6th District
 George V. Connors (D) - 8th District
 Theodore J. Boccuzzi (D) - 9th District
 Bertram A. Friedman (D) - 13th District
 Charles J. Heinzer, III (R) - 13th District
 Kim Varney (R) - 16th District
 William H. Flanagan (R) - 19th District

"CALL" OF MEETING:

MR. TRUGLIA read the following "Call" of the Meeting:

October 20, 1972

To: All Members of the 12th Board of Representatives
 From: Mayor Julius M. Wilensky
 Subject: "CALL" of Special Meeting to consider the adoption of an ordinance setting up a "Transit District" and appointing the directors thereof.

I, JULIUS M. WILENSKY, Mayor of the City of Stamford, pursuant to Section 202 of the Stamford Charter, hereby call a SPECIAL MEETING of said Board of Representatives, for

TUESDAY, October 24, 1972

At the Municipal Office Building, Second floor,
 429 Atlantic Street, Stamford, Connecticut.

At 8:00 P.M.

for the following purpose:

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To consider and act upon an ordinance creating a "Transit District" and the appointment of directors thereof. You already have information on this and we will have experts at your meeting to answer any questions you have. The Stamford Police Association has promised to withdraw their pickets at 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday night so that no Board member will encounter any pickets on Tuesday night.

Julius M. Wilensky
Mayor

JMW/awm

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

MR. LIVINGSTON requested a Moment of Silence in memory of the former baseball star Mr. Jackie Robinson.

MR. KNAPP asked just how will the vote be taken, do we need a majority of the members present or 21?

MR. TRUGLIA said at least 21.

MR. FOX rose on a Point of Order. He asked if we are voting for the publication of this Ordinance or are we going to have a vote prior to that for the waiver of publication?

MR. TRUGLIA said he thinks at this point he just wants to see whether or not we want to accept it.

MR. FOX asked to clarify the question, just what are we voting for?

MR. TRUGLIA asked Mr. Fox in his opinion should it be for publication?

MR. FOX asked from a technical point of view or from his bias point of view? A ordinance ought to be published before it is enacted but he said he thinks the Charter provides for a waiver of publication with two-thirds vote. Whether you want to take that course of action is a whole different question.

MR. RUSSEBACH rose on a Point of Order. He said we are talking about waiver of publication and we have something before us that we have not even had any debate on yet.

MR. TRUGLIA said we will have a discussion.

MRS. SHERMAN asked are we going to vote simply on the ordinance or does that apply also for the voting on the appointments of the members of the Transit District Committee.

MR. TRUGLIA said the "Call" of the meeting is two-fold. Setting up a Transit District as so worded by our Mayor and appointing directors thereof.

MR. MORRIS said it's the Transit District we are really voting on, the people have to be interviewed by the Appointments Committee.

MR. LIVINGSTON rose on a Point of information. He said he's not even sure if he should ask this question but it does concern party and party obligations and we Democrats did obligate ourselves to our Town Committee and has any thought been given to this?

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MR. TRUGLIA said he cannot speak for the Democratic party at this point.

MR. MORRIS said he thinks we are just going to vote on the Ordinance for the Transit District because letters have been sent out to both Republican and Democratic Town Chairman to approve names or not approve them and pass them on to the Board of Representatives and believes that they would go through the appointments Committee.

MR. FOX said he would like to present, with the permission of one of the nominee's for this authority that he has indicated a preference to go through the applicable committee's before his appointment, he's not dismissing the alternatives but he has indicated that the correct course might be for review of the potentialities of the perspective nominee's and has consented, namely Mr. Tobin, has freely consented to go forward with all the committee's necessary to reach this position.

MR. TRUGLIA said just a matter of information - we do realize that these people have not been interviewed by our own appointments Committee.

MR. SHERER said we are putting the horse before the cart, and that we should take one thing at a time, if we pass the Transit District then we shall worry about the appointments, if we don't pass the Transit District we don't have to worry about anything.

MRS. PONT-BRIANT said she would like the Minutes to show that we had a two hour open executive meeting in which many members discussed things because she doesn't intend to ask questions all over again.

MR. EXNICIOS said he agrees with Mr. Sherer that this should be taken up in two parts, one as the creation of a Transit District, and secondly, the appointment of the directors. Also, he said he would like to point out that if we do not waive publication that we met here -- it takes thirty days after publication that we can enact an ordinance and the buses go out supposedly Sunday night, therefore HE MOVED that we waive publication of this ordinance. Motion seconded.

MR. TRUGLIA asked if there is any discussion. He said that they have on the floor the adoption of an ordinance setting up the Transit District, and again he will ask the people if there is any further discussion and if not then we should proceed with the voting.

MR. RUSSBACH said with the Board's indulgence, that he normally doesn't engage in long speeches - but this is not long - he did a lot of research and he would like to express his opinion on the Transit District. Just how far are we willing to travel down the disastrous road to bail out private enterprise with public money? He said it is totally incongruous and incomprehensible to me why we must have continual government infringement upon the capitalistic system and free enterprise and its profit loss motivation. Tonight we are faced with another of these proposals - why should we the taxpayers fund the deficit of a private corporation - if it were a question of the inability of a corporation to acquire capital for vehicle purchase and other operating expenses, this would be dilemma worthy of consideration. But yet, the chief stockholder of the Connecticut Co. is personally worth between seventy and one-hundred million dollars. In addition to this, he is a majority stockholder in the security Connecticut Life Insurance Co. whose 1971 financial report has admitted assets of twenty million dollars and capital and surplus of 6 million.

In other words, he has the ability to buy these buses out of pocket money. Yet the Connecticut Co. cries poverty and financial inability to raise capital. Haven't we learned from previous bitter experiences that public money does not create solvency the two greatest exsamples of this are the travesties of virtual government takeover of Lockheed Aircraft and a total receivership of State and Federal Governments of the Penn Central Railroad. The taxpayers money subsidizes Lockheed, a private corporation two-hundred and fifty million dollars, to prevent impending bankruptcy. Yet the poor management which recreated this situation has not changed and the two hundred and fifty million dollars has run out.

Lockheed is still tottering on the brink of bankruptcy and two hundred and fifty million dollars of taxpayers funds has gone naught. Has the Penn Central improved since government takeover? Very little if any. Yet the liabilities of its operation have been in essence transferred from its beleaguered stockholders to the red ink side of the taxpayers ledger. How does the public really profit by the use of its money to bail out private enterprise? You all know very well that if the Transit Districts are created that fair increases are inevitable, regardless of what anyone says, if you have the money to run the buses, they demand more money for driving them. So what happens, the spiral continues, the public transportation runs further in the red, unions want more, and further in the hole goes the taxpayer. In this proposal before us tonight, is it any different from the potential problem of the Stamford Water Co? You can rest assured that if they are legally compelled to build a new filtration plant they will say the hell with it, and declare bankruptcy just like the Connecticut Co., that's the easy way out, everybody does it that way today. What do we do then? We have established precedents by using public funds to fund public transportation - we then will have no alternative to taking over the Stamford Water Co. because it also qualifies as a vital public utility as does the Connecticut Co. If the initiatives capitalism and the profit motive cannot properly run a corporation - how in God's name can you expect a bunch of laymen - politically appointed by government, having no expertise in this area, do any better job with the public's money than what is running the private enterprise system now. Creation of a Transit District under these circumstances as presented and these conditions would be a tragic mistake and the opening of the "pandora's box" of many future woes, and you better believe it.

MR. MORRIS said he would have to agree with many things that Mr. Russbach said, but we are possibly 30 years too late. We are subsidizing the New Haven Railroad - if we didn't, a lot of people would be out of work. He said what bothers him and he doesn't like to get in a bind anymore than anyone else - we have to realize one thing, this bus service, there are many people who rely upon the bus to take them to work, these are people much in a lower class we deprive them of means to get to work, they will not get to work and we are always talking about people getting on relief, he thinks they are talking double, saying people don't want to work and they are saying we can't supply them a way to get to work. He just wants to point out that he doesn't want to see the City lose any money, but we can terminate this in one year. He said he is voting to give this a chance to work.

MR. GUROIAN said he would wish to say at this time that he is expressing the opinion his opinion and Mr. Knapp's - We and many of our colleagues except Mayor Wilensky, convey the impression to the general public that all that stood in the way of approval of the proposed Transit District on Thursday was the Stamford Police Association picket line. He said he resents the falsity of the Mayor that such an approval by the District Board was a foregone conclusion.

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He said that his concern for the commuting public and the fact is the Transit District Board of Directors may make mandatory assessments upon this municipality without need of approval by the legislative body of this City. Further, due to equal concern, is the open-ended nature of the proposed Transit District. No one can challenge the fact of the already overburdened taxpayers of Stamford. We recoil at the thought of yet another burden when we reflect upon the arrogance and autocratic behavior of other ... Finally, we object to the high-handed manner which the Mayor has employed in calling a special meeting on this matter, and his arbitrary selection of Directors for this proposed authority.

MR. TRUGLIA said that he would wish to make the correction that the Mayor does have the right to call the Board for a special meeting if he so wishes.

MR. SHERMAN...said she thinks we're faced with a very serious dilemma. We all want the buses to run and yet the Mayor and everybody here was told that even if we voted for this Transit District there's no guarantee ...frankly, it makes no sense that we should have to subsidize a public company with any profits they may have one year and then pick up the law suits they may run into later. Suppose that company made a half-million dollars one year and then the following year lost a hundred thousand? She said we as a City would have to pick up those losses. It makes no sense at all. She said she can't believe that the State has to handle all this....she said she really believes the Commission was here tonight but rather to get more cities involved to justify the facts that we don't have. Then the State will be forced to do somethinginstead of throwing it into the hands of a City agency that can be autonomous and do anything that they see fit, so she said she for one is against it.

MR. RUSSELL said he was speaking for the need of this proposed Transit District certainly because he thinks we have a very serious situation at hand,young and old he said we do have three thousand young students depending on the buses. We also have six thousand of the general public using it a day, which is made up of the elderly, factory workers, people who cannot afford to drive cars. They are still a lot of people -- six thousand..... he said he won't go into the figures strongly, except the fact that it does seem to affect a sizable amount of the general public, who seriously depend on it. Not too many years ago, in fact about a year and a half ago, the problem was in a taxi service for many people in Stamford, particularly the elderly ...the people who used the Penn Central. He said what he is driving at is that he thinks that we have a problem here that is nationwide, worldwide, that transportation is a problem. He said we talk about the transportation in other countries, but he said he thinks we've got to realize they are largely or completely subsidized on government money they are not privately operated. This is probably why they are in such good state..... He said that it has to be done, he thinks we have to face the facts that somebody's going to have to.....it depends on how it's going to be operated. He said don't think Stamford has any choice.....he said he thinks something has to be done, that transportation should be provided for a City of 125,000 people. He said he thinks a city this large cannot exist properly without some form of general transportation.....The position in which he finds himself he said he thinks he has to support the Transit District proposal because he doesn't think he has any alternate.

MR. FOX said he is going to vote "no". He said he has the feeling that if this action tonight is approved it would be regretted three or four or five year..... He said that the Governor has made a political decision, a decision that leaves

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the City holding the bag. The urban centers of this state have not bought what Commissioner Wood was selling tonight. He said there is no way that he can rationalize in his mind Stamford going on the hook for a substantial operating deficit for transportation facilities. He said he can't envision our sister cities of Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford, or Waterbury, cities built for the same thing. The legislation that creates the bodyformed tonight is the sole guideline we have as to what is going to happen in the future.....What is happening, to get back to his original point, the Governor has decided that politically, it is a bad thing to ask an entire State, namely the suburban and rural areas of this State to pick up the tab of City bus transportation. He said Commissioner Wood stated this explicitly, and he would ask the Commissioner, although he's not here now, why it is getting expensive to live in Cities, and yet these same people who live outside of cities will turn around, look to us for their commercial centers, they look to us for their shopping centers, they will expect us to staff these centers with people, with unskilled labor, semi-skilled labor, bus riders and they look to us to foot the bill. He said the Governor again recognizes this and has made it painfully clear to us tonight that he is putting the squeeze play on. Commissioner Wood has come down here with a hard line and the hard line.....is what he's going to do and he's not going to change it. He said tonight if we hold the line and the other cities in this State go along with us, and he said he suspects that they will, the Governor is going to have to change his tune. He said he thinks he'll have to make another political decision and that decision being he is not going to let the cities go.

MR. MORRIS said that to his understanding that Hartford is in the process of forming a transit district.

MR. FOX replied that Hartford has a Transit District and it has people appointed, but it is not operating under the statutes nor is it functioning under this law as it is presently enacted.

MRS. FORMAN said that she has listened with an open mind to all the information presented tonight.....admittedly it does look like the state is holding it over our heads and will continue to do so. However, what are our choices? Do we really want the State to run our bus service from Hartford if they would do so? She said she thinks not, when we know how arbitrary their decisions can be and we should know our own local situation better than anyone else.....she said she thinks we should give the Transit District a one-year try with a better than average odds for its success.

MRS. LAITMAN said we have to look ahead, not to what is happening on Monday, but what is going to happen a few years hence. There is a very strong possibility that even if we pass this legislation tonight there will be a strike and there will be no buses on Monday, She said she is voting on behalf of the people.....

MR. LIVINGSTON said this is probably the most difficult decision he's had to make since he's taken his seat on the Board. He said he's listened to both the pros and cons. One thing he said he is positive of - if the buses do not run Monday morning there will be people who will possibly lose jobs. He said he can foresee people who are not on welfare possibly joining the welfare ranks. He said he will vote "yes" for this, in spite of the fact that it is being shoved down our throats, in spite of the fact that this may be wholly political.....

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MR. MORABITO said, to me this is another example of and is another step down the road to Socialism.....he said to him it's odd that Stamford is the only one in the State showing a profit and yet we're being asked to subsidize a profit-making organization.....

MR. LENZ said he wanted to make it very clear tonight that he will not vote to create an Ordinance to form a Transit District and a Transit Authority in Stamford. He said he certainly does not feel we should burden our overburdened taxpayers with this additional loadthe Mayor is asking us to pull the governor's chest-nuts out of the fire, but it is the public who will get burned.

The following ROLL CALL VOTE was taken for the Creation of a Transit District:

THOSE VOTING IN FAVOR:

- CAPORIZZO, William (R)
- DIXON, Handy (D)
- FORMAN, Barbara (R)
- LIVINGSTON, Jeremiah (D)
- MORRIS, Thomas (R)
- ROSE, Matthew (D)
- RUSSELL, George (R)
- TRESSER, Michael (R)
- TRUGLIA, Anhtony (D)

THOSE VOTING IN OPPOSITION:

- BOCCUZZI, John (D)
- COLASSO, John (D)
- COSTELLO, Robert (D)
- EXNICIOS, Robert (R)
- FOX, Gerald (D)
- GURIOIAN, Armen (D)
- IACOVO, James (R)
- KNAPP, Warren (D)
- LAITMAN, Marilyn (D)
- LENZ, Frederick (D)
- MILLER, Frederick (D)
- MORABITO, Joseph (D)
- PERILLO, Alfred (D)
- PERKINS, Billie (R)
- PONT-BRIANT, Lois (R)
- RAVALLESE, George (D)
- ROOS, John (R)
- RUSSBACH, Daniel (R)
- RYBNICK, Gerald (D)
- SCHADE, Richard (R)
- SHERER, Sidney (R)
- SHERMAN, Edith (R)
- WALSH, Peter (D)

The creation of a Transit District was DENIED by a vote of 9 in favor and 23 opposed.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Mr. Truglia moved for adjournment. Seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 P.M.

APPROVED:

George V. Connors

 George V. Connors, President
 12th Board of Representatives

Diane Maciejczyk

 Diane Maciejczyk
 (Recording Secretary, pro tempore)

Note: The above meeting was not broadcast over Radio Station WSTC.