

SPECIAL MEETINGFebruary 26, 197513th BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVESStamford, Connecticut

The meeting was called to order at 9:16 p.m. by MR. ROBERT B. EXNICIOS, who asked the members to rise for the following prayer:

Dear God, we who are assembled ask your help to assure that all members of the Stamford Board of Representatives fully understand and carry out their responsibilities to the people of Stamford and act tonight with a view to serving God and themselves. We further ask that those members who have not seem fit to participate with us tonight can in clear conscience justify their absence. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: MR. EXNICIOS led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

MR. EXNICIOS said this was a duly called meeting of the Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford under Section 202 of the Stamford Charter. He then read the CALL of the meeting as follows:

The purpose of this meeting which was called to order at 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26, 1975, is to consider and act on Mayor Frederick P. Lenz's proposal for Stamford's application to obtain \$2,034,000 - Community Development Block Grant under the Housing & Community Development Act of 1974 and further, to consider and act upon any possible alternatives.

MR. EXNICIOS said this CALL was signed by more than ten members of the Board of Representatives including the following:

R. B. Exnicios  
L. A. Hoffman  
K. A. Zimble  
R. B. Sainburg  
John A. Sandor  
Armen Guroian  
George Ravallese  
Gerald Rybnick  
Joseph Morabito  
James Kelly  
Barbara McInerney

MR. EXNICIOS said that in the absence of the President and the Clerk and the Majority Leader he was assuming the Chair as Minority Leader. He said he appointed MR. MORABITO as CLERK.

ROLL CALL: Roll Call was taken by Mr. Morabito. At that time there were 11 members present and 29 members absent. The members who were present were the following:

Robert Exnicios (R), 1st District  
Armen Guroian (D), 7th District

Leonard Hoffman (R), 11th District  
James Kelly (D), 12th District  
Barbara McInerney (R), 20th District  
Joseph Morabito (D), 12th District  
George Ravallesse (D), 8th District  
Salvan Ross (D), 15th District  
Gerald Rybnick (D), 4th District  
John Sandor (D), 4th District  
Kurt Zimble (R), 16th District

MR. EXNICIOS said there was no quorum and the meeting could not be official. He said it would be proper for those who are present to make remarks regarding the Call of the meeting. He requested that the Secretary record the minutes so that they may be submitted to the full Board on Monday evening.

MR. EXNICIOS said he was surprised and somewhat shocked that the entire leadership did not see fit to attend as their absence showed disrespect for the ten members who signed the meeting petition and for the many thousands of people represented by the members who signed. He said every member has the responsibility to the people of Stamford as a whole to attend duly called meetings. He said official meetings can be called by the Mayor, the President of the Board or any ten members. He said he would like the record to indicate that he suggested and started the petition to call this special meeting. He said through the courtesy of an interested citizen, Mr. Cohen, the leg work was accomplished. He said notice was served on every member of the Board without the assistance of the Police Department, as is customary for special meetings. He said he was sad to hear that pressure has been put on some members not to attend. He said he suggested this meeting because of a matter of the timing on the block grant vote. He said while it is true that there were several public meetings on this grant it is also true that not many citizens participated in these public meetings. He said this Board was given no opportunity in a special session to suggest its own inputs. He said the Board met with Mrs. Mitchell in December but that meeting was strictly informational. He said he felt it was incumbent on the administration to call another meeting of this Board for suggested projects for this grant money. He said each Representative represents thousands of people and they should be heard. He said the reason for this meeting is that on Monday night the Board will have very little to act on. He said the choice on Monday is to accept or reject the program in its entirety. He said he personally talked to the Mayor and to Mr. Miller and to Mr. Boccuzzi. He said he asked Mr. Miller to honor the request for a special meeting made by ten members of this Board and said it is callous of him not to honor the Board with his presence.

MR. GUROIAN read the following letter addressed to the members of the Board of Representatives:

"You constitute our government. It makes no difference that you have only part of your time available to devote to the functions of government -- you still constitute our government. You may be unpaid, but you are still our government. This nation was founded by farmers who, when necessary, threw down their plows to become part-time soldiers and statesmen. You have no less a duty -- in fact, your responsibility is greater than that of our people in 1775 since you have been elected to public office. Those men just 200 years ago didn't even have a government to fight for at the time -- they were fighting

MR. HOFFMAN said as a result of this meeting they decided that some \$494,000.00 would have to come out of the Mayor's proposal, as follows:

1. Housing Site Acquisition - \$300,000.00

MR. HOFFMAN noted that there are already several areas that have been set aside and there is no money to build on these sites at this time. He said they disagree with taking more private property off the tax rolls until the property already acquired has been developed.

2. Program Development, Rehabilitation Grants, etc. - \$105,500

3. Demolition Program revolving fund - 25,000

4. Street Improvements - 25,000

5. Transition to Community Development - 49,000

MR. HOFFMAN said this proposal is not meant in criticism of the Mayor and they do recognize that a lot of effort was put into this but they do feel that the present program leaves the elderly short-changed.

MR. EXNICIOS said he would ask Mrs. Flaherty to see that the Mayor is hand-delivered a copy of these proposals tomorrow morning so he will have ample time if he wishes to make any changes in his proposal in response to this meeting.

MR. ZIMBLER said he is not really in disagreement with the overall intent of the proposal as submitted by the Mayor. He said he would, however, like to speak to one group that has been grossly overlooked and that is the commuters. He said commuters span a wide spectrum as they are elderly, young, rich, poor and live in all areas of this City. He said one thing they all share is that they get up very early in the morning and go down to that miserable railroad station and pay 50¢ to park their cars, not knowing what time they are going to come back, not knowing whether they will find their cars or if they find their car what shape it will be in or even if they themselves will be able to walk safely from the train to their car in order to get home. He said in the Local Guide to Community Block Grants there is a paragraph pertaining to local crime prevention - Paragraph I. He said he has suggested that a portion of this money be devoted to high intensity lighting at the railroad station as a means of providing some additional measure of safety to commuters. He said his reason for being here tonight is to put in this plea again on behalf of the commuters. He said he is talking about installing these lights on the City streets on the light poles that are already in place.

MR. EXNICIOS said he will see that the Mayor is informed of this tomorrow morning. He said he also wanted to note for the record at this time that two more Representatives have joined the meeting, as follows:

Linda Clark (D), 6th District  
Robert Costello (D), 6th District



MRS. MCINERNEY said she was at the meeting not because she felt that any of the suggested items are not valid or wanted but because she wanted to question the specifics on the amounts the Mayor is proposing. She said she wanted more answers to exactly how much can be obtained for all of the citizens of Stamford who qualify to receive assistance from the federal funds. She said to date she has not received any satisfactory answers to her requests for more details. She said as a responsible City Representative she is trying to insure the citizenry of Stamford that they do in fact get all the services they are entitled to. She said she would also like to add her voice with Mr. Zimble's for the need for crime-detering lights at the railroad station. She said the commuters have been long overlooked.

MR. RAVALLESE said he and Mr. Gurolan contacted the Mayor this morning. He said they did not forget the senior citizens and they have a very good possibility in the works for having senior citizens on the East Side. He said they are negotiating for a beautiful building for senior citizens and added he can not give details at this time because the proposal is in the works.

MR. GUROLAN said it was incumbent on him to enlighten whoever is listening as to why they claim that the Board of Representatives is the applicant and not the Mayor. He said the members of the Board should be here tonight to make amendments and modifications. He said the Mayor's proposal is not frozen. He said that as late as this morning modification was made to the Community fund allocations. He thanked Mr. Ravallese for personally going to the Mayor's office to see that that change came about. He said it is a crime that the other members of the Board, who are the applicants, who have something in their district which is deemed necessary, are not sitting here tonight, as the applicants. He said they have forfeited their right to speak to make changes. He quoted from the Rules and Regulations pertaining to this Act, Section 570.3 (b) Definitions:, as follows:

"Applicant means the State or unit of general local government which makes application pursuant to the provisions of Subpart D, etc."

MR. GUROLAN said once again that the Mayor is not the applicant and that the Mayor has designated himself as the applicant. He said this can be verified by reading the minutes of the special meeting of December 16, wherein he said he had taken upon himself the responsibility of designating what funds shall go to what projects. He said he shouldn't have because the applicant is not the Mayor, or the executive branch of government, but rather the legislative branch of the government. He said he hoped that that would clear up why they had the presumption, the audacity, to come here tonight and attempt to make a democratic form of government work. He said it is apparent that the President of the Board, a member of his own party, has seen fit to give the members a slap in the face and he is sorry that that came about.

MR. HOFFMAN said he overlooked one thing and he would like the record to show that there is an additional item that they feel is necessary and that is three busses to transport elderly handicapped citizens to and from senior citizen centers. He said the cost of this - three vehicles - all equipped for wheel chairs, would be \$21,642.

MR. EXNICIOS said he would like to note that all of the suggestions made tonight will be given to Mayor Lenz and as Mr. Guroian pointed out it is not too late for revisions to be made in the grant. He said they could be made up until 8 or 9 o'clock on Monday night and still be properly before the Board Monday night. He said it is true that the members of the Board can not make the changes as they must come from the Mayor's office. He said in closing that although there is still not a quorum present there is more than a quorum of Representatives in this building tonight. He said he would like it noted that the excuse may be that there are Committee meetings going on. He said it does not take much intelligence to understand that a call for a full Board meeting takes precedence over any Committee meeting. He said that is not a valid excuse. He said it is a shame that a majority of the people in Stamford are represented by people who are, in his opinion, shirking their responsibilities by not being here. He said he would like to quote from an article in the Advocate on February 22 written by Arthur Helms, to wit, "Of course, the Representatives must approve but they are faced with the distasteful choice of approve or forget the whole \$2,000,000. They can not alter the application. And the implications of the Mayor's muscle in this go deeper. This application includes no less than \$620,000 to acquire land for public parks and open spaces and housing sites. Whose land is bought is largely controlled by whoever sits in the Mayor's office....Big belt of power for the Mayor and the wielding of it bears close watching." He said that the people who must do the watching are the 40 Representatives of this Board. He said those that are here are watching and he hoped that the others will realize their responsibility to do the same.

MRS. McINERNEY said it was an oversight on her behalf as she neglected to speak on behalf of one minority who has been recognized slightly in the Mayor's proposal and that is the handicapped. She said there is an item for the removal of architectural barriers and this item will provide some improvement in removing these barriers for the elderly. She said she would like to call attention to the many handicapped people in Stamford in wheel chairs who are not able to get about. She said this particular item warrants more money.

MR. SANDOR said he agreed with everything that has been said here. He said too many times we are spending money that really doesn't help the people, such as the \$100,000 for trees and landscaping in the Mayor's proposal. He said he does not think they should build any of the Main Street Mall until they have somebody that is going to come into the urban renewal area. He said the money should be used for the elderly and for buildings that can be used now and not for the purchase of land. He said that St. John's Park is a Urban Redevelopment problem and they have \$5 million in their fund and he felt they should use that. He said they need a senior center on the East Side. He said the Mayor's proposal doesn't give the East Side a nickel. He said he feels this is unjust.

MR. EXNICIOS noted for the record that three more Representatives have joined the meeting as follows:

Vincent Martino (D), 10th District  
Diane Handley (R), 17th District  
William Flanagan (R), 19th District

MR. EXNICIOS said there are now 16 members present but there is still not a quorum. He said he will let Mr. Miller know that 16 of the members who elected him President have attended this meeting and maybe he will still see fit to call a special meeting before the end of the week so the members will not have to vote under the gun.

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10,432

In response to a question from MR. SANDOR, MR. EXNICIOS said he would like to run this meeting as a regular board meeting even though there is not a quorum, which would preclude members of the public speaking to the Board. He said he would suggest that the Republican Caucus Room is open and any members who wish to hear from the public could meet with them in the Caucus Room after the meeting. He thanked all members who showed up and ajourned the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

*Sally Flaherty*

Sally Flaherty  
Administrative Assistant

SF/dm

Note: Above meeting was broadcast in its entirety over Radio Station WSTC.