

Torrance, California  
November 28, 1939

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF TORRANCE

The City Council of the City of Torrance convened in a Regular Meeting in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Torrance, California, on Tuesday evening, November 28, 1939 at 7:45 P.M.

Mayor Tolson called the meeting to order.

Clerk Bartlett called the roll, those answering present being Councilmen: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. Absent: Councilmen: None.

Councilman McGuire moved that the minutes of a Regular Meeting held November 14, 1939 be approved as written. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was read from the Pacific Coast Showman's Association, requesting permission to operate a carnival during the week of December 18, 1939 and offering a fee of \$100.00 to conduct same.

Councilman Powell expressed the opinion that residents will need their extra funds for holiday purchases, and inasmuch as the carnival would take considerable funds out of the City, he moved that the request be rejected. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from B. Bradleigh, 327 South Ramona, Hawthorne, regarding murals and paintings for the civic buildings and requesting an appointment to enter into further discussion.

Councilman Powell moved that the request be referred to the Building Committee. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, conveying the recommendation of the directorate of the Chamber that the City Council authorize an appropriation for participation of the Torrance Municipal Band in the Torrance Christmas Program beginning December 1, 1939, and asking favorable consideration of the request.

Councilman McGuire moved that the request be granted. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, advising that an official commitment had been secured from the Los Angeles office of the Division of Motor Vehicles for establishment of a temporary bureau in Torrance for issuance of 1940 automobile license plates. It was pointed out that one of the requirements of the Division of Motor Vehicles in this respect is adequate police protection during the period of license plate issuance.

Councilman McGuire moved that the request for police protection be granted. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, requesting the recommendation of the City Council regarding the endorsement by the Torrance Chamber of Commerce of the program concerning A & I District Number 28 (Alondra Park) of the Gardena Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Tolson moved that the Torrance Chamber of Commerce be notified that the City Council recommends said refunding and that the Chamber be authorized to take action regarding endorsement of the program. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Walteria Civic Organization requesting that gutters on Ward and Park Streets from Newton to 242nd Street be cleaned once weekly. Referred to the Street Department.

A communication was read from the Walteria Civic Organization, requesting an appropriation for the regular Walteria Christmas program to be held December 22, 1939.

A gentleman from Walteria explained that the \$50.00 appropriation last year was sufficient, but that an additional \$10.00 is desired this year, adding that only funds absolutely necessary will be expended.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$60.00 be made for the Walteria Christmas Program. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from J. H. Stroh, Chief of Police, recommending that a license be granted to Angel Molinar to operate a pool hall in Pueblo.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the request be granted. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from R. F. Burdett, requesting permission to operate a pool hall at 1214 El Prado Street.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the request be referred to the Police Committee for recommendation. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the Los Angeles County League of Municipalities, advising that no meeting of the Los Angeles Division, League of California Cities will be held during the month of December, 1939.

A communication was read from the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, denying the request of the city of Torrance of November 21, 1939 for an appraisal of a Mack Type 95, 1000 gallon Triple Combination Fire Engine. It was stated that, under the Constitution, the County is prohibited from spending any money for the benefit of a purely local city matter.

A petition bearing ninety-seven signatures was read, requesting the City to consider the purchase of the necessary grounds of outdoor camp site to accommodate boys and girls of the city who wish to enjoy the out-of-doors and camping activities.

Councilman Hitchcock remarked that he was under the impression part of the Municipal Park had been reserved for the purpose above mentioned. He said the part of the park north of the Santa Fe Railroad track and facing on Cabrillo Avenue had been considered a suitable location for a camp site and recreation facilities. The matter was referred to the Recreation Committee for report.

A communication was read from the Division of Highways, State of California, consenting to conduct a traffic count at the intersection of Hawthorne Boulevard and Highway 101 as requested November 15, 1939. The opinion was expressed, however, that former investigations had disclosed that four-way stop signs do not offer the proper solution to this traffic problem. It was suggested that some other type of traffic control device which would interfere less with the free movement of the traffic be considered. An offer was made to study the situation thoroughly and advise the engineer of findings.

A communication and regulations from the Department of Public Works Division of Highways was read relative to distinctive road marking and asking an expression of the City Council's attitude regarding such a plan.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the City Council go on record as being in favor of uniform road marking and that the City Engineer be authorized to notify the Division of Highways to this effect. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Engineer Young brought up the matter of the right of way on Hawthorne Avenue from Torrance Boulevard north to Redondo Beach Boulevard, advising that the present right of way is between fifty and sixty feet and that the State Highway Department is anxious that the City make some effort to secure additional right of way and widen the highway to one hundred feet in order that it may be properly improved in the future as part of the State Highway system. He said they will not expend any large amount of funds on State Highways unless they have at least one hundred feet of width. By putting the right man in the field, he said, much of the right of way could be secured without any cost by promising improvement of the highway. He said that approximately \$1,000.00 (from funds allocated for expenditure on State Highways) would be sufficient to cover all the labor in connection with securing the right of way.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the City Engineer be instructed to contact a right of way man and obtain all the details as to cost, etc., before any definite action is taken. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Engineer Young reported he had investigated the request for elimination of flood water menace at 231st Street and Narbonne Avenue thoroughly. He said two men had advised him that, due to the sandy condition of the ground and the inclination to cave, it would be practically impossible to drill dry wells more than forty feet. They told him, he said, that to go below forty feet would be to risk losing their equipment. Mr. Young stated further that the dry wells had been cleaned thoroughly and recommended that no further action be taken until a storm of sufficient volume occurs to determine whether the dry wells will handle the situation.

Engineer Young said he had not received much information about the Legion Building which he was requested to investigate with the view of using the building for recreation purposes. He said the owners were more interested in selling the building than in renting it.

Engineer Young said the plans for installation of a culvert at 236th Street and Hawthorne Avenue are being prepared and will be ready in due time. Also, he said the request for improvement of Elm Street and for a street light at the corner of Eldorado and Elm Streets is being studied and will be reported soon.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$200.00 be made for material for street repair. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$120.00 be made for sprinkling system fittings for the lawn around the City Hall. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$150.00 be made for sprinkling system fittings for the lawn around the Civic Auditorium. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$65.00 be made for sprinkling system fittings for the lawn around the Library Building. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES:

COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the City Engineer be instructed to have a sodium vapor light installed on Cedar Avenue at the entrance to the General Petroleum Corporation Refinery. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman McGuire moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$180.00 be made for a check protector for the office of the City Clerk. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman McGuire moved that the City clerk be authorized to take an option on three (3) lots in Walteria with the intent of erecting a library building thereon as recommended by the Library Board in an amount of not to exceed \$600.00. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman McGuire moved that J. O. Bishop be re-appointed as Chairman of the Civil Service Board for a term of six years upon the expiration of his term of office December 31, 1939. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman McGuire moved that J. W. Crowther be re-appointed for a term of one year as a member of the Planning Commission upon expiration of his term December 13, 1939. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman McGuire moved that John Salm be re-appointed as a member of the Planning Commission for a term of one year upon expiration of his term December 13, 1939. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Clerk Bartlett reported receipt of \$1,302.21, dividend check from the State Compensation Insurance Fund.

Councilman McGuire reported receipt of the audit report from the Allen R. Smart Company. He said a meeting with Mr. Davis, their representative, is scheduled in the near future. He added that no one had examined the report thoroughly enough to give a detailed report, but that the finances of the City of Torrance had been reported to be in excellent condition. He added that the original report is filed in the City Clerk's office and is available to anyone who wishes to examine it.

Mayor Tolson moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$30.15, plus tax, be made for 1 (1) 1940 Model Harley Davidson motorcycle complete, less radio, with a trade-in allowance of \$475.00 for the two motorcycles now on hand. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Mayor Tolson moved that the resignation of John H. Stroh as Director of Public Safety be accepted and that the office of Director of Public Safety be abolished. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Tolson moved that Acting Fire Chief, John E. McMaster be and he is hereby appointed as Fire Chief of the Fire Department,

effective December 1, 1939. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Tolson presented:

RESOLUTION NO. 1367

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE FIXING THE SALARY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE AT \$230.00 PER MONTH, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 1939.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Resolution No. 1367 be adopted. There was no second to the motion at this time.

At this time, Councilman Murray inquired why the office of Director of Public Safety should be abolished. Mayor Tolson answered that, at the time the office was created, there had been no fire chief and that John H. Stroh had been appointed to the position as head of both the Fire and Police Departments; that since there is now a Chief of Police and a Chief of the Fire Department, there is no longer any need for the office of Director of Public Safety. Councilman Murray contended that the Police Department is left without a Chief as a result of the action in accepting the resignation of J. H. Stroh as Director of Public Safety. Mayor Tolson pointed out that Mr. Stroh had been appointed to both the position of Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police and the resignation is on the Director of Public Safety position only.

Councilman Murray moved that the motion accepting the resignation of John H. Stroh as Director of Public Safety and abolishment of the office of Director of Public Safety be set aside until the intent of the motion is clarified. Councilman Powell seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Tolson moved that the resignation of John H. Stroh as Director of Public Safety be accepted. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Tolson moved that the office of Director of Public Safety be abolished. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Murray and Powell. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell said he would be willing for Mr. Stroh to resume his former status as Captain of the Police Department, but that, in his opinion, Mr. Stroh was not qualified to the position of Chief of the Police Department.

Resolution No. 1367 fixing the salary of the Chief of Police was presented again at this time.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Resolution No. 1367 be adopted. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Powell. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pruitt brought up the subject of the Mack fire truck, saying that, since the Los Angeles County board of Supervisors had declined to make an appraisal, the city of Torrance should ask the Mack Truck Company to abrogate the contract. He pointed out several discrepancies which he said existed between the contract and the letters from the Mack Truck Company, the main one being, he said,

that the truck had been represented to the city of Torrance as a show truck when he had proof it had been represented to another City (Gardena) as a demonstrator. He asked the Council to make a motion to abrogate the contract with the Mack Truck Company, adding he felt the company would be willing to comply rather than allow any unfavorable publicity.

Mr. Klusman said it had been reported to him that the Mack Truck Company contacted Director of Public Safety Stroh regarding purchase of the truck and that Mr. Stroh had conferred with the engineer of the Fire Department, the matter finally being referred to the Fire Commissioner who presented it to the Council as a whole.

Mayor Tolson answered that the Mack representative contacted the Council before he ever saw Mr. Stroh, and added that he himself (Mayor Tolson) had first talked to the representative.

Mr. Powell expressed his willingness to abrogate the contract, saying he felt it had been misrepresented, but he felt the action should be taken by the committee which took the original action regarding the matter. He said further that the report that the valve did not function properly on the Mack truck at a recent fire was true and that it had actually been the main valve on the supply tank and not on garden hose as reported.

Mr. Isen asked for an explanation of why, when A. D. Stevenson and G. M. Calder were reduced from the ranks of chiefs to Captains of their respective departments, A. D. Stevenson had been reduced in salary to a Captain's salary and G. M. Calder had received his former salary as Chief, if not, he said, in one check, in an additional one termed an "expense account."

Mayor Tolson replied that Mr. Calder had obligated himself for an automobile at the time and the City Council had decided to allow the old salary rate for a few months. He added that the transaction is included in the minutes of the City Council.

Mr. Raymond suggested that salary increases and decreases, or changes of any nature, be published in the newspaper.

Mr. Pruitt again asked for a motion to abrogate the contract with the Mack Truck Company.

Mr. Klusman asked each Councilman to make a declaration of his attitude toward the truck.

Mayor Tolson stated that he, personally, feels satisfied with the truck and would vote negatively on any action to return the truck.

Councilman Hitchcock stated he also felt a good purchase had been made. He added he had felt reluctant to purchase a used truck at first, but after investigating the Mack truck, had concluded it was well worth the price asked. He said the city, in his opinion, had saved money on the purchase.

Mr. Ferguson advised the City Council to keep the truck if they were convinced it was a good buy; not to abrogate the contract to please one or two people.

Mr. McManus added a few remarks about the mechanics of a truck and said he did not feel the Council had given the matter their earnest consideration.

Mr. Isen answered Mr. Ferguson by relating that the Council Chamber had been filled to capacity at previous meetings by persons protesting purchase of the truck.

Mr. Powell stated that he had taken the recommendations of the Finance Committee, the Fire Department Committee and the Police Department Committee regarding the purchase and felt they were sincere in their efforts. However, he said, he is now of the opinion that the facts had been misrepresented and felt willing to abrogate the contract.

Councilman Murray stated that, since his knowledge of fire trucks was very limited, he would agree to any action desired by the majority of the Council.

Councilman McGuire stated he had considered the saving of \$4,500.00 on the fire truck purchase a worthwhile saving, especially in view of the fact that the truck had been guaranteed to give many years reliable service. He said he felt the truck was well worth the \$8,600.00 quoted. He said he would be glad to make a motion before the Council to have the contract examined by any attorney or attorneys who wish to do so, and if it is found to be defective or camouflaged in any way, he would be glad to send the truck back.

Mr. Isen answered it was not the contract which is defective, but the fire truck. Mr. Klusman agreed with Mr. Isen in this respect.

Mr. Pruitt said the City of Inglewood had a reduction in fire insurance rates of 10% per \$100.00 as a result of their recent purchase of a fire truck.

Mr. McGuire said he had been informed no reduction in the fire insurance rates in Torrance could be expected until a fire station alarm system is installed, which would cost \$45,000.00. Mr. Pruitt said that, with the cooperation of the Telephone Company, the installation could be made for \$3,000.00.

Mr. Pruitt again asked that a motion be made to abrogate the contract with the Mack Truck Company on the purchase of the Mack fire truck. No action was taken. Mr. Pruitt then made the statement that the fire truck purchase by the City is now under investigation by the United States District Attorney and the United States Post Office Department for willful use of the mails to defraud on the part of the Mack Truck Company.

Mr. Klusman asked why the Chanslor-Canfield Midway Oil Company allowed an old wire fence to remain on Madrid Street. Mr. Hitchcock said the matter has already been referred to the proper persons for remedy.

Mr. Leatherman urged that every effort be made to secure suitable property for a camp site for boys and girls of the City, mentioning the property adjacent to the Water Tank as a suitable location. He was assured the matter would be given every consideration.

Mr. Klusman inquired how much money has been set up in the 1939-40 budget for the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. McGuire answered that \$6500.00 had been allocated for said purpose.

Councilman Hitchcock moved all bills properly audited be paid. Councilman McGuire seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Hitchcock, McGuire, Murray, Powell and Tolson. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

At 9:52 P. M., upon motion of Councilman McGuire, seconded by Councilman Hitchcock, the meeting adjourned.

Approved:

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Mayor of the City of Torrance

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
City Clerk of the city of Torrance