

Assembly

MINUTES OF MEETING - COMMITTEE ON STATE, COUNTY AND CITY AFFAIRS,
54th Session, January 25, 1967

Meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Present: Hilbrecht, Garfinkle, Dini, Wooster, Tyson, Bran Hafen, Smith, Roy Young.

Absent: McKissick.

Chairman Hilbrecht welcomed and introduced Assemblyman Len Harris, Washoe delegation, explaining that Assemblyman McKissick was hospitalized and that Mr. Harris was appearing due to this absence. Others introduced to the committee were Mrs. Earl Nicholson, Nevada League of Women Voters; Mr. Walter Cox, Publisher, Mason Valley News; Mr. Curtis Blyth, Executive Director, Nevada Municipal Association.

Mr. Hilbrecht called attention to AB 48 and AB 49. AB 48 was continued for further consideration and public hearing from meeting of January 23. AB 49 has been referred back to the committee for public hearing. Mr. Cox and Mr. Blyth were present as interested parties to these bills.

AB 48: Russ McDonald outlined that this bill's intent was to clarify those areas of the Local Government Budget Act requiring publication of financial statements and lists of bills allowed. In the stress of the latter Act's original passage there was an oral "gentlemen's agreement" that these clarifications would have to be made and also subsequent opinions of the Attorney General have pointed up the need for them. The Legislative Counsel has been approached by a group of small publishers requesting that a study be made to determine the requisites specifically required in the publication of the statements and bills allowed.

Mr. Cox produced an example of a financial statement that had been published in compliance with requirements and indicated that with the exception of some very large taxpayers (railroads, for example) that statement, per se, would have very little meaning to the reader. As for lists of bills allowed, it was recalled that the Nevada Tax Association resented these publications unless the payments listed were specifically identified with the service or supply rendered or furnished by the payee so as to have full meaning to the reader or parties concerned.

Mr. Garfinkle cautioned the committee upon the duty incumbent to fully evaluate any financial requirement versus the resulting benefit to be attained by the requirement. It was noted that the larger counties (Washoe and Clark) have publishers who do not like to have lists of bills published preferring adherence to the requirement that posting in compliance with the Act could furnish the interested parties with the information desired. Mr. Cox, However, indicated that in the smaller communities the finding of desired postings can be difficult and an unnecessary, cumbersome process. In those

areas such publication is preferred. He indicated that these smaller areas maintain a fairly good, tight government whereas the larger areas tend to cease assuming the responsibilities that are outlined.

Mr. Smith asked for an estimate of the cost of publishing the financial statements as against the actual income derived by the publisher. Mr. Cox admitted that in some instances the income would not meet full, actual cost but further emphasized the ethical duty of publishers to perform their part of the public duty incumbent upon them without constant reference to actual cost versus revenue received.

Mr. McDonald mentioned in this connection that the rate for legal advertising is fixed by statute, The required publications outlined in this bill, however, would not in all cases be classified as legal advertising.

Mr. Smith mentioned that from his experience on a city charter meeting that because of publishers' objections to revenue loss only monthly postings in the City Hall were required.

Mr. McDonald informed the committee members that Mr. Cox had served previously in the State Senate, and was therefore experienced as a legislator as well as in his vocation as publisher.

AB 49: Mr. McDonald indicated that this bill pointed up the problem created by the Local Government Budget Act in that as it reads now there is a conflict between cities and towns relative to the requirement of publication of a tentative budget. A tentative budget could consist of 400 or 500 pages the publishing of which could be impractical. Publication costs in the small counties range from \$15 to \$35 approximately whereas large county costs might run to \$300. There are publication requirements set forth on printed forms of the Nevada Tax Commission all of which are not known to the committee. Then there are the requirements to be outlined in this bill.

Mr. Wooster questioned whether or not the conflicts actually do exist under this bill as had been indicated.

Mr. Young asked whether or not any of the publication bills pending would infringe upon the areas of this bill. Mr. McDonald indicated that other legislation did not deal with financial statements and AB 48 and 49 were the only ones in this category.

Mrs. Tyson indicated that the practice in Las Vegas recently does not adhere to the publication requirements of this bill.

Mr. Curtis Blyth advised that the Nevada Municipal Association is interested in this legislation and that full representation from the association will be present here next week as interested parties.

Mr. Garfinkle moved AB 48 and AB 49 continued for further consideration until all sides of the matters can be heard.

Mrs. Tyson seconded.

Motion unanimously passed.