

# Did Council Approve \$20,000 Sum For Watershed Purchase?

## Councilmen Split On Issue As Officials Confused On Decision

By Frank Purcell

The city council has either earmarked \$20,000 in the proposed new water department budget to buy watershed land—or it hasn't!

One councilman, the city clerk and the head of the water department agree that the money was set aside.

The mayor and four councilmen say it wasn't.

The other councilman and the city manager could not be reached for "polling" this morning.

And there the matter rests today—after three nights of hearings last week on the proposed \$1,667,861 budget for the 1954-55 fiscal year.

The elusive \$20,000 is—or is not—a part of the water department's proposed budget of \$446,460, or \$456,960 or \$476,960, depending on which figure one accepts after Friday night's budget hearing.

**Confused? You aren't alone.**

The dilemma had its start when the water department budget—which, unlike other municipal departments, is a separate operation from the city's budget—received tentative approval in the total amount of \$456,960.

This included \$10,000, tentatively added to a proposed \$25,000 expenditure, for an engineering study of dam sites.

Also approved tentatively—for everything about the budget to date is on a tentative basis—was \$500 for a pumping station on Branciforte drive.

These two actions were taken after nearly two hours of discussion, mainly devoted to the proposed engineering study.

At one point during the discussion, the matter of purchasing watershed lands came up. It was discussed briefly.

But during the informal conversations, Water Superintendent Weston Webber said: "If you want to provide for watershed purchases. I would suggest the sum of \$20,000."

Whether any formal action was taken on the suggestion is the core of the dilemma.

Webber said today he "thought it was accepted" and so marked it down in his copy of the proposed budget.

City Clerk A. J. Miller agreed with Webber.

Glenn Kendall, administrative assistant to City Manager Robert N. Klein, had no recollection of acceptance.

(Neither did the Sentinel-News reporter.)

City Manager Klein was in Santa Clara for a conference and could not be reached.

There the matter of the \$20,000 stood—was it in or was it out?—until an informal "poll" of the members of the council produced this "clarification":

Mayor Patrick Freeman: "We earmarked \$500 for watersheds. We did not, as I recall it, set aside \$20,000."

Councilman George Penniman: "We put in \$500 for the Branciforte drive project and we put in \$20,000 for watersheds. I asked the

water commission if they wanted that amount inserted and they all nodded their heads. (Members of the commission were in the audience.) Then I said, let's put it in. So I put it down in my budget."

Councilman Sam McNeely: "I don't think we put anything in—at least not that I recollect. We discussed the matter and then we went on to talk about the survey. But I don't think we finally decided about the \$20,000."

Councilman C. L. Dysle: "We added \$500 but we didn't add \$20,000. Anyway, not that I know of."

Councilman Robert Burton: "Last year we set aside \$25,000 to buy land at the headwaters of Laguna Creek. But we spent only \$300 to have the land purchased and that deal was never completed. As a result, the \$25,000 was not spent and was taken off the budget. I was trying to reinstate the \$25,000 out of department funds but the \$500 item was the only amount mentioned. We didn't earmark anything. And \$500 is just a piddling amount that has nothing to do with watersheds."

Councilman Tom Polk Williams: "We discussed it but we didn't add it."

Councilman William Davenport could not be reached immediately for comment.

And there the matter stood today. Was \$20,000 added to the water department budget or was it not?

The council will probably decide at next week's meeting.

Friday night's budget hearing also considered the proposed budgets for these departments, with tentative approval given:

Civil Service—\$9164 as submitted.

City Manager—\$15,030 as submitted.

Purchasing—\$8116 as submitted.

Garage—\$29,267 as submitted.

Museum—\$1705, an increase of \$366 in salary to Mrs. Laura Flickinger, custodian, to cover rent requirements.

Library—\$85,649 as submitted.

Water—\$456,960, an increase of \$10,000 to the sum of \$25,000 earmarked for engineering studies and \$500 for watershed land.

Tentative approval was given the bookkeeping on various municipal funds.

### PILOTS KILLED IN

### BOMBER COLLISION

Seoul (AP).—Two American pilots were killed yesterday when their F84 fighter-bombers collided about 10 miles southeast of Taegu. Their names were withheld.