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(Continued from Sentinel.)

VICTORIA COUNTY COUNCIL.

SPECIAL SESSION.

Andover, April 17, 1890.

Council met in special session, the Warden in the chair. Present, Councillors Brymer, Tweeddale, Philip, McCluskey, Scott, Kupkey, Gillespie, Kelly.

The Warden read a requisition to him signed by Couns. Tweeddale, Brymer, Kupkey, Phillips and Scott, asking him to call a special meeting of Council. He also read the notice given by him calling the present session, the object of which was to consider the question of removing the Secretary Treasurer on the ground of neglect of duty and, if found necessary, the electing a new Sec. Treas. and the considering of all matters pertaining to that office.

The Warden stated that all the members of the Council had been served with notices of this special meeting, either personally or through the mails.

Coun. Brymer said that before proceeding to business he would like to hear a report from the Secretary-Treasurer, and as to whether he could justify the course he had pursued.

The Secretary-Treasurer said that the first thing he desired to do was to tender his resignation of office, but this could only be legally done at a meeting competent to accept the same. He read the portion of the Act showing that in order to call a special meeting it was necessary to put up notices of such in the several parishes, and as well to personally serve each councillor with a copy of the same. This he claimed was not shown to have been done; three of the Councillors were absent, and he claimed the right to have them present. He would tender his resignation, but did not acknowledge the right of the meeting to act upon it. He wished a legal meeting called to accept it. He then read his resignation.

Coun. Brymer must express surprise at the course pursued by the Secretary Treasurer under the circumstances. This meeting was called to consider all matters connected with his office, and his action seemed to acknowledge that he has not given satisfaction, but, clothing it with a legal technicality, he tenders his resignation. Perhaps this was the right way of doing; perhaps it might bring that officer more popularity, but in his opinion it was a strange way to proceed. Surely from the unsatisfactory way that officer had been doing, or leaving undone the County business, as witness his not having yet furnished for publication the minutes of January session, it appeared unbecoming in the Secretary Treasurer to now bring forward the technical objection that this meeting is not legal. He tenders his resignation, but his protest shows that he would rather hold the position longer. They had met to transact the business mentioned in the notice, and he claimed it was competent for them to elect a new Secretary Treasurer. The Secretary Treasurer claimed that the meeting was illegal, because the Councillors had not received proper notice, but he (Brymer) thought that was showing a poor principle. Let him tender his resignation, show a clean sheet, and then he would stand far better in the opinion of everyone. He was very sorry to have to ask that the Secretary be displaced, but he felt compelled in the interest of the County, as well as from the generally expressed desire of his own constituents to do so. The rate-payers say they cannot get him to transact the County business; some of the warrants of assessment had only been issued at a late day, while a portion had not yet been issued at all. He was sorry to have to talk thus, but he was speaking for the rate-payers generally, who say they are willing to pay a man a fair remuneration as Secretary Treasurer, but they expect him to attend promptly to the County business.

The Secretary Treasurer remarked that Coun. Brymer had intimated that he (Sec. Treas.) was trying to gain popularity by the course he was pursuing, but, even if that were true, he would not be striving any harder after popularity than was that Councillor. He had been appointed to office at the January session, and he felt that he would be responsible for the duties pertaining thereto, until he was legally displaced. What he desired to do was to now tender his resignation, and then let a regular meeting be called to accept it.

Coun. Brymer denied that he had said that the Secretary was striving to gain popularity. He esteemed his position and, while here, he wanted to do his business as a Councillor in a straight-forward and plain manner, and did not pretend to claim popularity, except in so far as his works merited it.

Coun. Tweeddale said he was partially responsible for calling this meeting. Rumors had frequently reached him of the unsatisfactory way in which the business of the Secretary's office was being transacted; it was said that the debenture for \$500, for which money in hand was reported at January session and which the Secretary stated he would retain to meet it at maturity, was dishonored. Knowing the Secretary was sick he paid no attention to these rumors, and supposed that the Secretary had used the \$500 to pay other claims and thus was unable to retire the debenture when due. As late as March he received information that the debenture was still unpaid, and he then felt it his duty to take some measures to discover the cause of the trouble. He had ever entertained the highest regard for the Secretary, but he felt personal feelings should not weigh against public duty. He determined upon having a special meeting called, and framed and had signed a requisition to the Warden to call such. Before taking this step, however, he felt it was but justice to the Secretary Treasurer to inform him of the course intended to be taken. Himself, Couns. Brymer and Kupkey called on the Secretary and told him what was proposed to be done, and asked him for an explanation of his con-

duct. He acknowledged that he had been neglectful, but said that he had been sick. He, however, had been about his office for 3 or 4 weeks after his restoration to health and still no assessment warrants had been issued, minutes of January session had not been published and the over due debenture had not been paid. After talking with the Secretary some time, he finally asked that we look over the business since January, and if we found everything satisfactory, to let matters stand as they were, and he would do better in the future, and he would also pay the debenture that was due. We consented to do as he wished. Visiting Andover, three days after this time he (Tweeddale) was surprised to find the debenture still unpaid. Stratton claimed that he had the money to pay it, but Beveridge was annoyed at having so often been deceived by the secretary in his promise to pay, that he declined to call on Stratton, claiming that he (Stratton) should now bring the money to him, and finally he left the debenture with a lawyer for collection. At a still later date, finding the debenture still unpaid, he called on Mr. Beveridge and asked him to go with him to Stratton's office, but Beveridge said he did not feel like going. Coun. Kupkey, at his request, saw Stratton, and obtained his promise to call in the afternoon of that day and pay the debenture; at 6 o'clock, p. m., he found Stratton had not fulfilled his promise, and then in company with Coun. Kupkey, went to Stratton's office, but he was not in. Next morning he found the debenture still unpaid, and then he presented the requisition for a special meeting to the Warden. This morning the Secretary had proposed calling another meeting, but this he, (Tweeddale) considered more child's play. If the Secretary has been conducting his business aright, there was no reason why he should refuse to show how matters stand. The Secretary presented himself before them to-day, without any books, etc., and hides himself behind a mere technicality. In his opinion it would have been far more creditable to the Secretary, if he had prepared a report of the public business to lay before them, and had not descended to a mere subterfuge. Everything seemed to confirm the suspicion existing in his own mind, and that was abroad generally, that it is impossible for the Secretary to make a satisfactory explanation.

Moved by Coun. Tweeddale, seconded by Coun. Brymer, and—Resolved that Stratton's resignation be noted and that Council proceed to business.

(Here a brief discussion arose as to seeking legal advice as to the course to be pursued, but no action was taken.)

Coun. Tweeddale said that the most serious consequence of the neglect of the Secretary was the fact that they would have no assessment for statute labor the present year. He had written Mr. Baird asking him to get special legislation authorizing assessment for road work. The ground of objection taken by Stratton did not apply to an examination of his accounts, and he would insist upon an explanation by him of how the business affairs of the county stand.

The Secretary Treasurer said he had no objection to giving any information desired, but claimed that this meeting was called for a special purpose. He could tender his resignation, but the law not having been complied with, its acceptance now would not be binding on the county.

Coun. Scott said I don't want the Secretary to resign. He gave bonds in January, which are good, equal to cash, for a year. The Council accepted his bonds then and now we ask him to resign; what for? He would not go for accepting his resignation, but would vote for a committee to be appointed to go over his accounts. The rate payers were not satisfied, neither was he himself at the way the business was being done by the Secretary. Any rate payer could go and examine the Secretary's books.

Coun. Brymer thought that Coun. Scott impeached him and Coun. Tweeddale, of having a bad feeling towards the Secretary. No man at the board had a higher respect for the Secretary as a man and gentleman, than had he (Brymer), and he was sorry to impeach him, but he was compelled to through the Secretary's own negligence. That officer has been guilty of negligence and had admitted the fact. He would be willing to do anything he could to retain him, but he felt to do so would be contrary to the wishes of the whole county.

Scott asked in what way had the Secretary done wrong. To be sure he had not paid the bond, but they knew nothing of the transactions between Beveridge and the Secretary—perhaps the former owed the latter.

The Secretary Treasurer said the prime object of this meeting was the considering the transaction of county business by the Secretary, who if found wrong was to be removed. If the meeting considered itself properly constituted, it should have accepted his resignation. He could not now accept the motion.

Coun. Scott—can we appoint a committee to investigate?

Coun. Tweeddale considered the objection of the Secretary of no force. The absence of three councillors was no proof that they had not received notice of the meeting. The object of the Secretary seemed to be to obstruct the business of the meeting. If his accounts were all correct why not have them here for inspection? Even granting his claim as regards the illegality of the meeting, they could insist that he submit his accounts for inspection.

Coun. Brymer thought it unnecessary to argue the matter as all must agree with Coun. Tweeddale that the Secretary had a right to present his books and papers here for inspection. It was a strange fact that he made no attempt to show how the county business stands. The question was would they submit to such treatment at the hands of their officer; or will the Secretary relieve himself from the painful position in which he is

placed by saying like a man here are my book vouchers, statements for your examination? Andover had been condemned for not paying her taxes, but rate payers in other parishes might be condemned for paying their rates, not knowing for what purposes their money might be used. The respect hitherto shown the Secretary ought to influence him to come up manfully and give the fullest explanation; he was surprised at the position that officer had taken.

The Secretary Treasurer replied that the Council was supposed to meet to transact certain business; I say that as the meeting is not legally called I cannot submit. (Brymer, we ask for your accounts.) The requisition is not for an examination of accounts.

Moved by Coun. Tweeddale, seconded by Coun. Brymer and, Resolved—that the Secretary-Treasurer be called upon to submit his books and accounts at this meeting.

Secretary-Treasurer said if any councillor wants to see any books they can have the privilege, but I refuse to present them at this meeting; will not show them to you, Coun. Tweeddale, here, so long as this meeting is in session.

Coun. Tweeddale—If you refuse to produce your books, etc., will you answer me some questions?

Secretary-Treasurer—I will so far as I can.

Coun. Tweeddale—Have you received the loan of \$500, authorized at January session.

If so from what bank, and on what terms.

Answer—Yes. Received it through myself, at 7½ per cent. interest.

Question—Is the County responsible to you?

Answer—Yes.

Question—Is there any firm holding any claim against the County for the \$500?

Answer—No.

Question—Have you received the balance of proceeds of sale of Town lots at Grand Falls, since January session of Council?

Answer—Have received \$316.00.

Question—How much have you received from the Inspector of Licences since January?

Answer—\$340.20.

Question—How much have you received for fines?

Answer—\$100.

Question—How much have you received from collecting Justices?

Answer—\$400.

Question—Did not your account show a credit balance in January in the neighborhood of \$500?

Answer—Yes.

Question—When did you issue the warrants of assessments?

Answer—About the 11th of February.

Question—When did you send the publishers the reports of the proceedings of January session of Council?

Answer—They have not yet been sent.

Question—Have you taken up the debenture that fell due in February?

Answer—No.

Question—Did you agree to pay it on a certain day?

Answer—I told Coun. Kupkey, if it was presented to me I would pay it.

Question—Can you pay it to-day?

Answer (was understood by the reporter to be)—My endorsement is on the bond given for the loan of \$500, from which I must be relieved.

Question—Then you will hold the \$500 until the bond is paid?

Answer—I borrowed it on my own endorsement.

Question—In event that the bond is not paid at maturity, who will be responsible?

Answer—The county.

Question—Why object to pay the debenture due with the \$500 in hand since Jan.?

Answer—It was too late in the evening referred to by you to attend to it, and next day I was informed that notices for this meeting had been issued.

Question—Have you the \$500 in hand?

Answer—I have \$500 in hand.

Question—If that debenture is presented now will you pay it?

Answer—I will wait to see what Council will do.

Coun. Scott remarked that when the requisition asking for the calling of this meeting was first presented to him he had refused to sign it. He felt that Beveridge's claim to have his debenture paid was no stronger than was that of the poor girls teaching for small salaries to have their drafts paid. It looked as though the school drafts were not to be paid until Beveridge's bond was taken up, and he would not sign a requisition for that. He had said investigate all the transactions of the Secretary Treasurer and then he would go for calling a special meeting. There was too much giving way to the claims of the rich, while poor school teachers were treated with neglect. His idea was that the school drafts should be paid first. If Council did not assess enough to meet county contingencies, then let Secretary pay as far as the money would go, and let Council increase their assessment.

Coun. Brymer thought Coun. Scott desired to shirk responsibility and to censure those calling this meeting; intimating that meeting was called at the instigation of Beveridge. He (Brymer) stood there as an independent man to represent an independent parish; he was not a dingle, a mere mouthpiece for anybody or clique, but desired to do the business of the county in a straightforward manner and to represent his parish honorably, and asking for nothing but what was fair and right. It was unfair for Coun. Scott to say that the interest manifested was simply because it was Beveridge that was interested. In January the Secretary reported that there was a debenture of \$500 about falling due, but he (Brymer) never asked who it was payable to. He ascertained from the Secretary that he had \$500 in hand to meet the debenture, and he had confidence in the truth of the statement. His cause of complaint was that the debenture was not paid; and he

repudiated the intimation that he was acting in the interest of any clique or clan.

Coun. Scott had no objection to find with Coun. Brymer, but he could not see why all this fuss was made about the debenture. It appeared that the Secretary had not paid it, and now Beveridge could sue, and if so the Secretary would have to pay the costs.

Coun. Brymer was interested in saving the county from the payment of cost.

Coun. Tweeddale said, judging from his remarks Coun. Scott attributed the calling of this meeting to the fact that Beveridge's debenture had not been paid. Well, he contended that of itself was quite sufficient cause for the course pursued. Coun. Scott says Beveridge can sue, but surely the county does not want to be sued when it has funds on hand to pay. The desire of the council, he believed, was to pay all legitimate debts against the county, whether the claimants were rich or poor; to maintain the dignity of the county and faithfully discharge the public interests intrusted to it. When the Secretary-Treasurer had been urged to do what he could in order to pay a just claim, and failed to do so, he thought there was nothing strange in their asking that officer for an explanation of his conduct. Coun. Scott made light of the fact that a debenture had been dishonored, but he was pleased to be able to tell that councillor that this was the first instance in which a debenture of the county had been dishonored. From all that had transpired he was strongly of the impression that the secretary was not in a position to retire the debenture.

Coun. Scott said that at January session, knowing that the rate-payers were not satisfied, although he himself was perfectly satisfied with the secretary, he had nominated J. E. Porter for the office of secretary-treasurer, but no one seconded his nomination. Not a councillor then seemed dissatisfied with the secretary. That officer is under good bonds, and now if he and Beveridge had a quarrel it was nothing to the council; if Beveridge did not get his pay he could sue. He had nominated an opposition secretary, but the councillors refused to accept him, and now they were putting the county to all this bother.

Coun. Tweeddale said Coun. Scott placed all the blame on the council; none on Stratton. In January the council was satisfied, from the report of the auditor, that up to that time the business of the secretary's office had been conducted straight. Of course there was some fault finding at the secretary's apparent neglect, but this was overlooked on the ground that he had been taking an active part in the then recent election. The secretary then had produced his papers, and on examination his account was found correct. He (Tweeddale) was satisfied that if the secretary to-day could back up his account as presented at the January session, it would be shown that the county had not suffered one cent loss. He had never before seen an instance when he thought the secretary had done wrong. He believed the council had failed in making sufficient provisions to supply funds to meet the claims of the county; this opinion of his he had already placed on record. Rate-payers expressed surprise at the present indebtedness of the county, in view of the fact that when the secretary-treasurer took office there was a balance to the credit of the county of \$1,000, but it must be remembered that \$500 of that surplus was applied to the purchase of a safe and \$500 expended in the work of taking the valuation. Then, again, for two years following, the assessment each year was but \$500, for contingent purposes, and the next year only \$600. In none of these years did the expenditure for contingencies fall below \$1600, which shows that a deficit must necessarily come. In two years, also, there was an extra expenditure entailed by the Dyer and Howe criminal cases; in the latter case an assessment of \$2,200 being necessary to meet the expenses. The ordinary yearly expenditure for contingencies is \$1600, and with the small yearly assessments made it would be readily apparent how the business of the county is retarded. Knowing these facts he was disposed to overlook the grumbling abroad in reference to the Secretary, previous to the January session, and thought that by a slight yearly increase of the assessment the finances would be brought back to a healthy condition. But at the January session such arrangements were effected as satisfied him (Tweeddale) and satisfied the Secretary, that within sixty days thereafter the Secretary would be able to call in all claims against the county save the school drafts, and leave but a small portion of indebtedness against the county at the end of the year; and, next year, by a small increase of assessment, there would be a surplus in the treasury.

The Warden read a note from two of the sureties of Secretary Treasurer, J. E. Porter and T. R. Cameron, asking to be relieved from any further liability as such sureties.

Moved by Coun. Tweeddale, seconded by Coun. Kelly, and Resolved, That as this meeting is not in a position to act upon the communication, it take no action in the matter.

Coun. Brymer said that if it was intended to have a special meeting of the Council, he thought it desirable to have Mr. Watts present, so that he might report and publish proceedings thereof so that the county might know what was said and done.

On motion Brymer, seconded by Tweeddale, it was Resolved, That Mr. Watts be requested to be present at the special meeting of Council to be called for the 29th inst.

Adjourned sine die.

SPECIAL SESSION.

Andover, April 29th, 1890.

A special session of Council, opened this day at the County Court House, Warden in the chair and all the Councillors present, except McCluskey, whose absence was caused by illness.