

Assembly kills spending

By GREG GADBERRY
Daily News reporter

AUG 17 1983

The Anchorage Assembly on Tuesday ended a long battle to put a city spending limit and limit on the ballot by killing the proposal.

The assembly voted to reject Assemblyman Don Smith's proposed spending limit plan. That plan would have placed a cap on city spending that could only rise as much as the city's population and inflation rates.

Smith asked the assembly to put the initiative on the ballot after he failed to get enough signatures on petitions to do so.

The assembly also rejected Smith's plan to amend his spending limit to include a tax limitation proposal.

The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Anchorage Womens Club have worked since May on a petition drive to place a tax limitation before the voters. But the group

learned Tuesday that the city had rejected about 40 percent of the signatures on the group's petitions. Without those signatures, the group did not have enough names.

Under the tax limit plan, the city would determine tax levels using a formula based on inflation rates and population levels.

The assembly's decision is seen by some city officials as a major victory for Mayor Tony Knowles.

Last month, the assembly approved a spending limit plan authored by the Knowles administration. Knowles has contended that his plan was much more moderate than those offered by Smith and the Chamber of Commerce. Knowles has said repeatedly that the Smith plan and the tax limit plan would not work and would cause problems when the city tried to balance its books and provide for essential services.

Anchorage Daily News Wednesday, August 17, 1983

tax limit ballot proposals

Supporters of the tax limitation proposal say they will still try to place their initiative on the ballot.

Group spokeswomen told the assembly Tuesday that the city was too strict in choosing which signatures it would accept.

Last week, the groups turned in petitions with more than 7,100 signatures. The city requires about 5,100 certified signatures in order to put a initiative on the ballot.

But before the petitions are approved, City Clerk Ruby Smith must certify that the signatures are correct. For example, signers must be registered voters and must date the petition after signing it.

If people sign petitions with different names than they used on their voter-registration cards, Smith's office must check voter lists to see if the voters actually exist.

Smith reported Tuesday that she approved

only 4,107 signatures of the 7,100 turned in by the tax-limit group.

Linda Rexwinkle, an organizer of the petition drive, was angered by the clerk's decisions.

Rexwinkle said she disagreed with some of the criteria Smith used when deciding which signatures were valid.

Rexwinkle said her group wants to meet with Smith and discuss the names that were disqualified.

Under questioning from assembly members, Smith said that many signatures were disqualified because the petitions were improperly signed or failed to have a date. But Smith said there is little that petition organizers can do to save their petition.

"There is no place to go," Smith said. "They can go to court and challenge it."

Smith spending limit petition drive fails

by Jeff Berliner

Times Writer

JUL 26 1983

Anchorage Assemblyman Don Smith has failed in his spending limit petition drive.

For the past 90 days, Smith has sought to put his version of the spending control issue on the ballot at the next municipal election by circulating petitions.

Smith called for a change in the municipal charter to permanently stop spending at whatever the sum of population increases and cost of living increases amounted to, with a 15 percent ceiling.

Two other competing spending limit proposals will be before the assembly tonight — seeking to control city spending and call-

ing for voter approval of new capital project costs.

Although the other proposals, by Mayor Tony Knowles and Assemblyman Rick Mystrom, would set spending limits, Smith said only his own does the job of controlling city spending.

He shrugs off his defeat at collecting the needed 5,141 signatures to get his own plan before the voters, saying, "I didn't have enough time."

Smith said he missed his goal "by a few hundred" signatures, and is unwilling to drop his plans despite the petition failure.

On the contrary, he plans to walk into tonight's assembly meeting, stack of petitions in

See Smith, page A-4

Continued from page A-1

JUL 26 1983

hand, and — just as if he had gathered all the signatures he needed — argue that thousands of voters support his plan and thus so should the assembly.

Having failed to get his plan on the ballot Smith said he'll seek to amend any other spending limit proposals so they incorporate his views.

Smith launched his petition drive April 15 when the mayor unveiled his own spending limit plan. Smith had 90 days to collect

the signatures.

Knowles wants to base the budget on inflation increases which are measured by the percent of increase in the consumer price index from one year to the next. Anything beyond that would have to be approved by voters or required by other laws, under the mayor's plan.

Mystrom wants to require voter approval for all new building projects which will cost more than \$1 million to operate and maintain over five years.

to taxes sought

Mayor Tony and Assemblyman Don Smith, both authors of previous spending limits, responded cautiously to the tax limit initiative. Story, Page B-2.

By DON HUNTER
Daily News reporter

MAY 18 1983

Two Anchorage organizations launched a petition drive Tuesday in support of an initiative to limit the tax increases that local elected officials can levy annually.

The proposition, and a companion measure that would change the municipal fiscal year to match that of the school district and the state, needs the signatures of 5,141 qualified voters to be placed on the October ballot. To pass, it would have to be approved by a majority of voters.

The tax limit proposed by the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Anchorage Women's Club would be based on a formula involving changes in the Federal Consumer Price Index and the city's population.

The drive ruins a promise made by chamber officials last year when they unsuccessfully tried to convince Mayor Tony Knowles and the Anchorage Assembly to consider a similar measure and to reduce a \$30 million boost in local tax supported city spending.

about \$30 million this year — would have been cut in half had their limitation been in effect.

Chamber President Frank Turpin, women's club president June Dierks and two members of the chamber's municipal committee, Millett Keller and Linda Rexwinkle, said the tax ceiling is necessary to control government spending that spiralled out of control during the years of Alaska's oil affluence. 5-18-83 DJ

Turpin, Dierks, Keller and Rexwinkle said their proposal would complement an initiative sponsored by Assemblyman Don Smith.

The proposed limitation formula would add the percentage increase in consumer prices from the prior fiscal year to a five-year average of population change. Keller acknowledged that it could lead to a mandate for a shrinking budget if the city's population were to decline for several years.

"It's possible that could happen," he said. "But I think an argument can be made that government shouldn't cost as much if the population declines."

Keller also acknowledged that using a five-year average of population changes could limit the city's capacity to respond to sudden boosts in population such as the early years of trans-Alaska pipeline construction. But, he said, "we think that's more appropriate" because it would force officials to consider long-term financial needs. 5-18-83

The proposal would allow several exceptions to the limit:

- Taxes on new construction or new property added to the tax base during a given year;
- Taxes to support new or expanded voter-approved services;
- Special taxes approved by voters;
- Taxes to pay interest or principal on bonds sold by the city, or to finance repayment of legal judgments against the city;
- Taxes required to support emergency spending authorized by an ordinance approved by 8 of the 11 assembly members.

Keller said taxes to finance operating costs of voter-approved, state-financed local projects also would be excluded from the limitation. That means the assembly and the mayor could exceed the limit, if necessary, to pay the cost of operating the Project 80s headquarters library, performing arts center and sports arena.



Millett Keller answers questions about the tax limit petition at

MAY 18 1983

Tax cap crusader lives her politics

By GREG GADBERRY

Daily News reporter

As Linda Rexwinkel strode into the room, several pairs of eyes rolled toward the ceiling in mock annoyance. There were even a few grins. Rexwinkel, the so-called Fiscal Pixie, was back at the Anchorage Assembly.

It was a familiar scene — one that has been played out over and over again. Rexwinkel, the short, feisty housewife and political activist from the Anchorage Woman's Club, would warn city leaders their spending policies must change or they would be changed for them. The assembly would listen politely. Rexwinkel would then go home frustrated.

That changed in 1983. Grins were replaced with grumbles, mock annoyance turned to real animosity. Armed with a couple of paragraphs, Linda Rexwinkel was leading a revolt against the Municipality of Anchorage, a revolt called Proposition 24.



Linda Rexwinkel

In a way, those confrontations were inevitable, she said. Her politics were simply too strong to stay at home.

One day her oldest daughter Julie, brought home a sixth-grade textbook that talked of the good works of Karl Marx. Such words were anathema to Rexwinkel, an



^{NOV. 27 1983}
Millett Keller, who drafted the tax measure, saw higher taxes as a warning