

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Finance and Planning  
March 26, 1991**

Present: Burton Shapiro (chair), Avner Ben-Ner, David Berg, David Biesboer, Lael Gatewood, Virginia Gray, Michael Hoey, Nick LaFontaine, Fred Morrison, Mary Sue Simmons, Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Charles Speaks, John Sullivan

Guest: Assistant Vice President Neil Bakkenist, Rich Broderick (Brief), Senior Vice President Robert Erickson,

**1. Report of the Chair**

Professor Shapiro welcomed Senior Vice President Erickson to the meeting and called for introductions.

Health Plan He then reported on changes in the health plan. There is insufficient information on the size of the network; the Task Force also does not know if the new union will choose to stay with the State Plan or elect a new University plan (if it chooses the State Plan, the size of the group for any University plan will be smaller--which could have an impact on premiums). There is also insufficient time for carriers to respond to the RFP. As a result, there will be a delay in the implementation of the plan to January of 1993. Authority to separate from the State Plan will be requested of the Board of Regents, but only if it makes sense to do so.

Professor Shapiro commended the Task Force for its responsiveness to the concerns expressed by the Committee, among others, and noted that the delay is caused in part by taking the concerns into account.

Steam Provider Professor Shapiro next reported that Professor Ibele had received a call from a former legislator, Tom Berg, who is now an attorney for Northern States Power Company. Mr. Berg inquired which University committee it would be appropriate for NSP to make a presentation to on its proposal to become the steam provider. Professor Shapiro said he told Professor Ibele that it would be inappropriate for such a presentation to be made, because it would constitute lobbying a faculty committee. The role of the Committee, he commented, is to provide advice and consultation to the University administration; if the administration, however, wishes the Committee to become involved in these presentations, it could do so.<sup>1</sup>

Other Committee members expressed support for the position taken by Professor Shapiro. Senior Vice President Erickson also concurred. There will be issues, vis-a-vis the steam provider, which will

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Morrison wished it noted for the record that he abstained from participation in this discussion because the law firm with which he is affiliated has a relationship with the firm with which Mr. Berg is affiliated.

require consultation, he said, and those are now being formulated. He noted that he does not want to bring to the Committee a final decision already made, but the issues are complex and will require considerable time to address.

## **2. Discussion with Senior Vice President Erickson**

Mr. Erickson began by expressing his delight at being at the University. He commented that there are a number of major issues confronting the University, including the Restructuring and Reallocation plan. This plan, he said, has already had positive repercussions at the legislature; legislators see it as a mark in the University's favor. It is hoped that this reaction will help ameliorate the Governor's recommendation to cut the University's budget by nearly \$30 million annually.

In his discussions with the individuals who report to him, he has emphasized that the way the restructuring plan is implemented will, to a great degree, determine employee attitudes for the next several years. How the University deals with these issues, he said, will be critical; it can, however, emerge much stronger as a result.

One Committee member commented that this Committee is primarily faculty-student; one concern that many have is the "black box" of the units which report to Finance and Operations. It is from these units that there has been no measured response on how change will be accommodated. There has been a general commitment to a reduction of \$10 million in Finance units, and a concomitant commitment that the reductions will not lead to higher user charges levied on the academic side of the institution. Perhaps the Committee and the administration could jointly address how Finance units will identify their share of the reallocation--what kinds of activities will be reduced or reallocated. Details of the plans were understandably sketchy when the Restructuring and Reallocation Plan was first presented to the Committee, but one of the functions of the Committee is to have a view of what is occurring in Finance units.

Mr. Erickson said he has not yet had the chance to address these issues, but will do so, and agreed that the commitments should be honored. As he turns his attention to them, he told the Committee, he would bring them to the Committee.

Another Committee member suggested that another matter which the Committee has touched upon, but not yet ascertained how to approach, is inefficiencies in University procedures and processes. Reports from other institutions have been instructive. This, it was said, is an issue to which the Committee should return. In this vein, another Committee member extended his compliments on the changes in the accounting procedures; it is a step in the right direction.

## **3. Parking Rate Increases**

Professor Shapiro next welcomed Assistant Vice President Neil Bakkenist, Support Services and Operations, to discuss the proposed parking rate increases. Mr. Erickson introduced the subject by commenting that he has already heard from a number of people about the rate increase which is scheduled to go into effect. He agreed that the timing of the increases is terrible; unfortunately, the plans have been in progress for considerable while and do need to be implemented. They would rather not have to increase the rates.

There was in 1985, Mr. Erickson reported, a comprehensive study of parking; it has been the driving force in parking planning. It is now time to bring that report up to date. He said he is prepared, subject to Committee counsel, to appoint a new task force to study the issue and bring the 1985 recommendations up to date and to look forward to the next five to ten years.

Mr. Bakkenist then explained the rationale behind the rate increases. He agreed that the timing is terrible; if it were not so necessary to have the funds for repair, maintenance, and construction, the increases would not be sought. It is also important to review the 1985 study, he said, and the faculty should be involved.

Many good things have been done in the past several years in terms of parking spaces; there were 14,000 spaces in 1985 and there will be 16,500 spaces in the Fall of 1991. The parking survey indicated a need for 18,000 spaces; while they "are not there yet, we are getting there." Policy issues need to be reviewed, in several areas. Some headway has been made, such as in departmental spaces.

The information to be presented, Mr. Bakkenist cautioned, must be prefaced by Committee understanding of several basic facts about parking. Most important is that the Parking Service is totally self-supporting: It receives no legislative funds. All past, present, and future maintenance and development costs must be borne by the income generated. Parking rates are set based on the financial needs and requirements of parking and directly-related parking services and facilities; they are based on no other principles.

For example, the chair of the Regional Transit Board (RTB), Michael Erlichman, recently told the Board of Regents that the RTB believes the University's parking rates are far too low and that rates should be levied to discourage parking and encourage use of mass transit. His public-stated goal is to have the University raise its parking rates by two to three times in order to meet critical social needs. Parking Services, Mr. Bakkenist told the Committee, concurs with Mr. Erlichman's view of social needs but not with his means of achieving them.

Another rationale for setting parking rates is the generation of income; it can be argued that rates should be set at a level the market would bear and use the revenue for other purposes.

The Regents have been clear, over many years, that income generated by units in Support Services and Operations is to be used by those units. That approach, Mr. Bakkenist recalled, was reinforced by the Task Force on Support and Service Units--a report endorsed by the Twin Cities Campus Assembly and a product of the governance system. The Task Force emphasized that no income generated by a support unit should go outside of that unit.

Mr. Bakkenist then distributed materials to the Committee and explained them. Included was information about the parking building plans for 1991-1995; Mr. Bakkenist reported that the Task Force had commented that "the lack of parking has become a hindrance in the accomplishment of the academic mission and must be addressed immediately with regard to the number of spaces available." The planned projects at least ameliorate the campus parking problems.

If there is no increase in rates, Mr. Bakkenist also pointed out, there will be deficits in Parking

Services in 1992 and 1993.

Mr. Bakkenist said he could, if the Committee wished, provide additional information on maintenance and deferred maintenance costs. After 1985, a consulting firm was retained to do an in-depth study of deferred maintenance; a report was issued in 1987 and has been updated annually to insure that parking services is only doing the proper and most appropriate work. The average deferred maintenance expense, over the next five years, is \$700,000 annually--which includes striping, surfacing, elevator work, safety additions, and so on.

The proposed rates were reviewed during Fall Quarter by two committees, the Assembly Committee on Support Services and the Health Sciences Parking Committee. Both committees endorsed the rate increases. Senior Vice President Donhowe received the recommended increase and the committee endorsements and approved the rate increases in January. Since that time, and since the publication of the increases, responses of the community have been carefully logged. There are about 7,000 contract holders; as of the day before the meeting, the following responses have been received: 38 negative and 9 positive telephone calls and 7 negative and 2 positive letters. These are not the only indicators of upset or support, Mr. Bakkenist commented, but they are one.

Mr. Bakkenist said he believes they have done everything possible to ensure that the rates have been reviewed by the appropriate governance groups. If the Committee wishes to revise the reporting system so that it sees proposed changes such as the parking rates, his office would do whatever possible to provide information in advance of any decision.

One Committee member commented that he had no problem with different parking rates depending on the facility. Why are not other factors taken into consideration, such as salary? In this fiscal climate, imposing the same rates on civil service staff and on junior faculty as are imposed on full professors is something which should be addressed.

What makes the timing of this increase so bad, it was also said, is because of the prospect of no salary increase for faculty and staff, possible reductions in the salary, and possible leaves without pay. In terms of comparisons with other institutions (data presented in the handout), the normal comparison group is the Big Ten. The data presented to the Committee include rates from Pennsylvania, Harvard, Berkeley, Illinois-Chicago, and only two Big Ten schools. Where does the University rank in the Big Ten? Mr. Bakkenist said he did not know; another Committee member said he had learned that the University was higher than the six other institutions who responded to inquiries. This comparative information, it was said, should not form the basis for a decision but it does affect the credibility of the argument--because it would be possible to find some group of schools which have higher rates than the University and ignore all the others. The appropriate comparison group should be used.

Mr. Bakkenist said that parking had tried to look at urban research institutions, where land values and operating costs are comparable; it is for this reason that the institutions were chosen for comparison.

It was also pointed out that the projected deficits for 1992 and 1993, if the rate increases are not adopted, presume that all projects will go forward. Given that the timing is bad, but that the rate increases are necessary, what would be the consequences of a delay of one or two years in the increases? What existing or planned functions or services would be lost? Mr. Bakkenist said that many of the projected

increase in the number of spaces would be delayed. Deferred maintenance projects not required by federal regulations would also be delayed, including some which would be cost-beneficial.

What would be the consequence to the University if the construction of a particular project were delayed (such as the deck in St. Paul and the West Bank project)? It is his understanding, Mr. Bakkenist said, that there are critical needs both in St. Paul and on the West Bank which are not currently being addressed and which are hampering the academic mission. One Committee member noted that parking had been a severe problem on the St. Paul campus ever since he arrived and there is no parking for visitors except on the State Fairgrounds.

There is no question that the parking situation is very bad. But there are many things at the University need improvement; many classrooms are deplorable. As long as timing is an issue, the University has a choice; would the faculty prefer that these rates be deferred until more is known about what will happen to compensation?

Mr. Bakkenist said parking would need to know what "deferring" meant. Does it mean deferring any increase, or the rates being proposed? It has been the goal, for the past 30 years, to try to manage parking facilities in such a way that extra costs are not passed along to users, especially the costs of borrowing money. These costs have been avoided in the past because rate increases have been addressed at the necessary times. While the timing is difficult, the rate increases are being considered over a six-year period (and the past four years have not been particularly negative). If the University wishes to face the parking issue as a legitimate, necessary service, then the rates must be increased.

Mr. Bakkenist was asked if there has been any estimate of the number of new spaces actually needed over the period of time, compared to the 5,375 new spaces that will be created. He said there has been; as of September, 1991, the University will be 2,000 spaces short of what an expert, long-standing committee said is required by 1992-93. The University is short by about 2,000 spaces, although the enrollment declines may mean that figure is slightly inflated.

Is there any role, in these plans, for environmental considerations; additional parking makes it easy for people to park. Providing new spaces will simply make it easier for people to ride, one per car, to the campus. Mr. Bakkenist said this is a tough issue; they are trying to balance environmental concerns with the need for people to come to campus. They have also tried to do more with the transit service, by promoting it as much as possible. Unfortunately, people love the freedom of the car and will not relinquish it. Parking service, he added, pays for the Route 52 bus service in order to reduce the need for parking spaces. However, it was said, making more spaces available may increase demand--causing expenses and rates to go up even further. Mr. Bakkenist replied that is one reason he wants a faculty committee to look at these issues. Mr. Erickson concurred with the sentiments, noting the problems with use of mass transit and the need to revisit several issues.

The rates for those who use daily lots and carpool decreased, Mr. Bakkenist noted, although those who have contracts and carpool will pay more. The hangtags created a problem for those people. Mr. Bakkenist agreed, although Parking has freed up 500 spaces because of the hangtags and then made changes to accommodate the problem.

The surpluses that have been generated, Mr. Bakkenist explained, were used to purchase land as

well as to make up the difference between anticipated and actual deferred maintenance expenses. Parking spent \$2.5 million to purchase land in the last year.

Could not bonding be used for capital expenses, Mr. Bakkenist was asked. The reason is to avoid the costs of borrowing for bonding, he said, which would increase costs. Parking could do that, but Support Services prefers to keep units on a self-financed basis. The Fourth Street ramp was built at a cost of \$8.5 million. The financing cost for that facility, in the first year, would have been \$600,000--on a 1200-space ramp.

One Committee member said she had initially had a favorable response to the letter announcing the rate increase; increased costs are the best way to discourage people from driving. Given the self-supporting nature of Parking, faculty, staff, and students who do not drive do not pay for the service; what about people who park on both campuses who do not use parking lots or who have parking supplied. Mr. Bakkenist agreed this was a legitimate equity issue which needs examination. There are several issues tied up in these arrangements which should be reviewed by the group to be appointed.

What are the accumulated reserves held by Parking now, Mr. Bakkenist was asked; he said there is \$2.5 million for deferred major maintenance and \$385,000 in capital as of June 1990 (after expenses for recent capital construction).

Mr. Bakkenist was asked why Parking was planning on spending \$20,000 per space for the Art Museum garage and charging the cost to the faculty and students. He said this is the kind of commitment that the University has not had in the past several years. In the middle 1980s Vice President Lilly made a commitment to the Board of Regents that \$2.1 million would be spent for parking if a museum ramp were to be built. There was no discussion of spaces or configuration, but there was a good-faith administrative commitment in order to help a project that the community seemed to want. Inflation increased the commitment to \$2.5 million. When planning began, it became clear that the site could not accommodate large numbers of spaces and that the cost of the project was a serious problem. The percentage of Parking's involvement in the basic structure, the pillars and so on, was always a discussion point. Parking negotiated in good faith; the best that could be achieved was 125 spaces. The dollar figure was committed in advance of a decision about the number of spaces; once that was done, there was little that Parking could do. Right now the funds are in the museum building fund--out of the hands of Parking.

Is the University obliged to continue what might have been a "silly mistake" ten years ago, Mr. Bakkenist was asked. What is silly, he said, was the commitment of dollars. Who has to say "OK" if you change your mind, he was then asked. Mr. Bakkenist said the issue was brought to Mr. Donhowe and the commitment was upheld. Without that \$2.5 million, Mr. Bakkenist added, there would be no art museum.

So this subsidizes the art museum, one Committee member noted, which may be fine. But it is hard to then argue that the parking rate increases are necessitated by a general parking space shortfall. It is required by financial transfers and commitments made by the previous vice president--without any consultation with any faculty group. Mr. Erickson rejoined that the point is well taken but that this is \$2.5 million out of total building program of nearly \$33 million; it is unlikely that this expenditure would change the need for a rate increase.

Mr. Erickson's point was conceded, but a general concern is the attitude which seems to prevail.

Academic units are facing very severe constraints, it was noted; they are being asked to cut and economize. The support service units do not have to face these constraints; they can buy \$20,000 parking spaces and because of a commitment by an earlier vice president, they can pass along the charges to academic departments who will have smaller supply budgets, to students who will face increased tuition, and to faculty and staff who may receive no salary increase. It is said that a university is a place held together by a common grievance about parking; that has certainly been true here for the past year. The hangtag system and parking unresponsiveness were the initial cause.

This is not a big issue; contracts increase by \$5 or \$60 per year. It is a major issue, however, when one looks at how the Finance services cost-transferring units are responding to the constraints that the academic units must face. There is no questioning about whether or not \$20,000 spaces are needed or if capital construction can be deferred for a year or two. Rather, there has been a plan since 1985 and it should be carried out. The Committee was presented a plan to improve the liberal arts curriculum that would have cost about 1/3 of the capital construction costs projected for parking; the Committee basically sent a message that the liberal arts improvements could not be made unless the funding could be identified internally. This is not the situation for service units on the Finance side--and the basic concern.

This relates to the earlier question of where the reallocated funds will come from on the Finance side of the University. There was a commitment, made by Mr. Donhowe, that when reallocations occur they will not consist of transferring costs to other people. This commitment is not being carried out in this proposal. \$5 per month is not bothersome; the principle is very important, as is its impact across the entire physical plant and support services side of the University.

**It was then moved and seconded that the Committee recommend to the administration that the parking rate increases be rescinded.**

On the art museum construction, Mr. Bakkenist said, they believe that parking for the museum, and in that section of the campus, is a good idea. They know that garage or underground parking is expensive; in a normal setting it would cost \$12,000 - \$15,000 per space. They would like to have obtained more spaces, but the negotiations with the museum and physical planning were good-faith efforts and the maximum number of spaces that could be provided were. What he is critical of, he said, is a prior commitment of a dollar amount without discussion of what the funds would provide. It is hoped that this will not occur again.

Inasmuch as there is a committee on support services, which has considered these issues at some length, one Committee member expressed reluctance to vote to reversal the approval extended by another committee.

One Committee member, who served on the Task Force on Support and Service Units, recalled that there was considerable dissatisfaction with support services--but Mr. Bakkenist's units were not among them. His units, in fact, were all deemed to be well run, efficient, and responsive to faculty concerns. With respect to parking, this is an issue in hiring; in negotiations with the department chair, a faculty member wants to know about parking. They will not come to the University if they have to park a long ways away and walk in the winter. The University needs these spaces. While concern might be expressed about the museum project, the Committee would be even more unhappy if these parking improvements were financed some other way.

Another Committee member commented that if the number of calls and conversations is a measure, people are more concerned about parking than health insurance. At least with respect to health insurance, some of the people were happy; nobody is happy about parking. Parking is a problem, however, and raising the rates is probably justifiable. People are upset at the timing, and are upset with comparisons with the private sector--where some companies have a lot of land and they may pay higher salaries. The Committee, it was recalled, has read about university funding being cost-plus--expenses are calculated, the profit is built in, and charges are then set. This is what Parking appears to do; where is the incentive to improve efficiency if all costs can be charged to users.

Mr. Bakkenist commented that while there had been unhappiness over the use of hangtags, they had been able to provide an additional 500 spaces as a result of adopting them. He said he appreciated the concerns expressed. He is trying to run an operation with appropriate checks and balances and annual reviews by senior administrators, and trying to provide the services its mission calls for. They produce an enormous amount of reporting, which is reviewed up the line. To deny an increase, at this point, is to not respond to the many people who contact them and say that parking is a serious detriment to the work of the faculty and that if something is not done Parking is negligent and being mismanaged. One way they are trying to respond is with this increase.

One Committee member noted, as had another earlier, that she retains a contract space but normally rides the bus. She has to keep the contract space because the bus often does not run late enough in the evening and provides only minimal service during breaks and summer session. If more attractive bus service could be provided, especially to St. Paul, the demand for parking could be reduced. Could not some efficiencies be achieved in this respect, and thereby recover parking spots which are being paid for but not used? Mr. Bakkenist said the point was excellent; funding and running a bus system, however, is also complicated, especially running it so that it does not have an adverse impact on parking rates. This is another of the complex issues which a task force should look into.

Another individual said that although the Support Services committee had approved the rate increases, that does not preclude this Committee from inquiring about the appropriateness of the timing of the increase. Nor does it preclude questions about the equitableness of the rate structure--it may be equitable, but the questions need to be asked. Just as a matrix ought to reflect costs of the facility, another factor which should be included is salary. Moreover, if it is true that the rate differential reflects facility costs, why are some of the increases different for different kinds of facilities--when the costs of the facilities themselves have not changed? Finally, is it not true that A-based appointees are subsidizing B-based appointees--who are not here during the summer?

One thing that Parking has done is calculated the amount of money it must generate, taking into account maintenance and capital needs. It then tried, as best it could, to apply the rate increases equitably. It is true that prices have not increased at the same rate. So there are new differentials, it was said; Mr. Bakkenist agreed. He said he would be glad to get into greater detail, if the Committee wished, and provide the full rationale for the differential rate increases. As far as salaries are concerned, Parking has considered it as an issue and has rejected it. One Committee member said there could be a legal problem if two people are paying different rates for identical parking spots, but another said he had difficulty explaining to underpaid civil service staff and junior faculty how much they have to pay; there should not be a problem making the rates different depending on salary.

Mr. Erickson said that basing parking rates on salary could be difficult to administer but that the rationale for the rates could be examined more closely. He told the Committee he takes very seriously his responsibility to improve efficiency. This is a very different responsibility in the public sector from that in the private sector, where one has the profit motive and one can ration capital accordingly--the decisions are much easier. There are many more parking ramps at the University now, due to its urban location--and ramps are an expensive solution to the problem. He assured the Committee that he would do everything possible to achieve efficiencies. Such discussions as this are useful in order to get the issues on the table.

The difference between the projected deficit--if the rates are not increased--and the surplus--if they are--is less than the \$2.5 million allocated for the art museum garage. Does that suggest that if the University were able to find a donor for the garage, could the rates be delayed? Mr. Bakkenist replied that they could not because there are increased operating and other costs built into the rates. There are a number of expenses that cannot and should not be deferred; delaying the capital projects for several years would be a disaster.

It was noted that the rate increase proposal was brought to the Support Service committee in November, before anyone knew of the fiscal crisis. It was brought forward without anyone considering the timing of the issue in relation to all of the other things the University began confronting.

On the hangtag issue, one Committee member remarked--since it has been mentioned--one reason that Parking Services has had so little comment and others have had so much is the unresponsiveness of Parking Services in the controversy and the peremptory way in which they proceeded. There is a sense in the community, and perhaps the reason for the target of this unhappiness, is that it is unresponsive unit. That, whether or not true, is a widely-held perception. The question of quality management must be examined.

The financing of the art museum garage, it appears, all disagree about. Deferred maintenance has been around for a long time and must be paid--whether on buildings or asphalt in parking. There may be 7% that could have been cut, and there also may be a possibility to delay or defer support from that side of the operation. Most of the discussion has been about the 10% that is margin. As one looks at the expenses, 40% is payroll and fringe benefits--which may or may not be well-spent. It is spent in part for people to sit in booths and not do anything for long periods of time. Would a sharper pencil aimed at the payroll budget help control expenses? It seems likely, particularly in the context of a time when the remainder of the University is becoming very lean.

Mr. Bakkenist responded to the alleged unresponsiveness of Parking. There appear to be rules on a campus; one always says dorm food is bad whether or not it is. If there is an amorphous discontent with Parking, he said, he did not know how to deal with it; what they try to do is provide the best service they can. He does deal with a large number of people who use the services he administers, people who are not reluctant to make their feelings known. Mr. Bakkenist said he was very pleased with the responsiveness of Parking, especially on the hangtag issue. They did make a mistake in sending out the first letter and immediately changed the policy. Parking received nothing but positive comments after making the change. When he took on his current responsibilities, Mr. Bakkenist recalled, he was dragged in front of a number of committees because of dissatisfaction. In the past few years that has no longer occurred--but

of course they can continue to improve the service. Sharper pencils have been applied, and will continue to be applied, but it seems doubtful, Mr. Bakkenist cautioned, that a committee--unless it takes an enormous amount of time--can decide if those pencils have been properly applied.

Mr. Erickson said that while he has not had time to evaluate management styles in great depth, he has walked through the facilities managed by Mr. Bakkenist and spoken with a lot of people, and the universal sentiment seems to be that Mr. Bakkenist has made measurable progress in the last five years. How much more progress can be made has to be examined. He said he feels that responsiveness to the customer is extremely important; all must work creatively to develop the measures in the public sector that exist in the private sector that encouraging efficiency. What those measures are have to be determined. But everyone has much to gain by efficiently-operated support services. This is a difficult issue, but it is clear that Mr. Bakkenist is committed to making these improvements.

Mr. LaFontaine emphasized that Parking receives no 0100 money. The administrative commitment was that academic units would not see cuts by central administration in their budgets. This is unrelated to that commitment, which remains in place. The reallocation strategy in Finance and Operation units was applied to support units. The telecommunications unit--which receives no 0100 money--is to reduce expenses by \$200,000 per year for the next five years. Parking Services has, in the past, transferred surpluses to plant funds and received no interest; the interest accrues to central reserves and is allocated to the highest University priorities. Support Services has been a team player.

Could not the elimination of support for the Art Museum garage eliminate the need for an increase for at least two years--without loss to Parking of revenues needed for maintenance and projects? Mr. Bakkenist agreed that it probably would, but pointed out that the Art Museum is completely designed and the money has been committed--the money no longer belongs to Parking. It is "a done deal," he said. In his mind, he said, it is not reversible.

The motion was repeated: **That the Committee recommend to the administration that the parking rate increases be rescinded.** On vote taken, the motion received four affirmative votes and five negative votes.

The Committee adjourned at 5:00.

-- Gary Engstrand