

World Herald Article

City Bus Fare Hike Wins State's Okay

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The Nebraska Railway Commission Monday approved a five-cent fare hike for Omaha Transit Co. The raise will go into effect in 10 days or when the Price Commission lifts its freeze on privately owned utilities, whichever is longer, Commissioner James Munnelly of Omaha said. The price Commission has postponed until March 20 a decision on lifting the freeze imposed last month. The commission voted 4-1 Monday morning to grant the increase to 45 cents, said Munnelly, who cast the dissenting vote.

Decision Reversed

The decision Monday represented a reversal of an earlier decision by the commission. The commission voted 4-0 Jan. 17 to deny the increase. OTC later asked for a rehearing, which the commission granted. Testimony was taken Feb. 25 at Omaha City Hall. Commissioner Eric Rasmussen, who did not vote in the first decision, joined Chairman Robert T. Marland and Commissioners John W. Swanson and Duane Gay in voting Monday for the increase. The order also raises student fares from 25 to 30 cents and the 10-ride and 36-ride discount tickets by five cents. A statement by Mayor Leahy urging the raise evidently had an effect in the commission's decision. Leahy said during testimony before the commission Feb. 28 that the raise would provide enough revenue to enable Omaha Transit Co. to operate for another three months.

'Temporary Raise'

During those months the city could make preparations to take over bus service, probably July 31, he said. The mayor said that the fare hike would be temporary and would be rolled back to 40 cents as soon as the city takes over bus operations.