

# City, Firemen Still Don't Agree On Pact

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Sentinel Star Staff

WINTER PARK — After the fifth meeting, the city and representatives of Fire Fighters Local 1598 have not reached agreement on the union contract.

Although the fire fighters have backed down on their demand for a cost of living increase, they are holding out for a promotional procedure and overtime pay for more than 56 hours a week of work.

The city's labor relations attorney, Robin Fawsett, rejected a promotional procedure proposal on grounds the city does not have the power to agree to it because it falls under Civil Service.

THE UNION'S proposal said there shall be a one-year probation for new fireman and following satisfactory completion of the probation, the fire fighter will be promoted to the grade of fireman. After completing one year of satisfactory service as a fireman, the employee shall be promoted to the class of fireman first class.

The question of overtime pay has not been discussed with city officials yet, according to Fawsett. He told the union negotiators he will bring it up with the city before their next meeting.

All city employees will receive mandatory overtime pay beginning in January when the new wage and hour law goes into effect. The union wants to include an overtime pay article in its contract so firemen can collect the extra pay before January.

GUS LaGARDE, a member of the union's negotiating team told Fawsett, "That's the trouble with the city. You're followers not leaders. If the law doesn't say do it — you've got a we're not going to do it attitude."

**Firemen back down on cost of living pay increase, but hold out for promotional procedure and overtime pay for more than 56 hours of work a week.**

The union will also submit a second counter proposal to permit shift exchanges between employees. Presently, the firemen are allowed to exchange shifts with permission of the fire chief on an informal basis, although there is nothing in the contract which covers this. The union wants to provide for shift exchanges in its contract to protect the procedure.

When Fawsett rejected the first counterproposal he said the city does not want such a provision on paper. He explained such a provision might come in conflict with the soon to be effective wage and hour law, forcing the city to pay a

fireman for overtime. Fawsett said the new act requires the city to pay the overtime regardless if the employee wants it or not.

CURRENTLY, THE firemen exchange working hours and work days, although the exchanged time is not always made up by both employees during the same work week.

Fawsett warned the union representatives, "You better not rock this shift exchange boat too much. I think it's a reasonable proposal but we don't want to put it in writing. We don't want to have

to agree to it each and every time."

The new counterproposal the union will submit on the shift exchange will allow them only at the chief or assistant chief's discretion and a denial of a shift exchange request shall not be grounds for a grievance.

FAWSETT SAID he would consider such a proposal.

The union had been demanding a five per cent cost of living increase but backed down on the demand with the provision that in the event a general, across the board cost of living increase is given any city department, all fire fighters will receive the same wage increase at the same time and on the same percentage basis.

Although this article will be included in the union contract, the city still has the right to grant "spot" or isolated merit increases to individual employees.

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