

Firemen plan negotiations

By **MISSY CLARK**
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WINTER PARK—Representatives of the firefighters' union are going back to the bargaining table with city management as the union continues its uphill struggle to get better pay, benefits and an overall more favorable personnel policy from the city.

Contract negotiations reached a dead end last June when city officials and union representatives were unable to agree on a compromise. The union was unwilling to accept the city's contract, and the city was unwilling to change it.

After the union declared an impasse, the state Public Employees Relation Commission appointed a third party "special master" to intervene. However, in August, the special master was unable to continue with negotiations, so the city commission was appointed to vote on the contract. It approved the city's contract, but the firefighters' union continues to reject it.

This time, the union will be negotiating two contracts: one for firefighters and another for officers. The union had originally wanted of-

ficers included in the bargaining unit, but the state Public Employees Relations Commission ruled against that request, saying lieutenants, battalion chiefs and chiefs come under the classification of management.

Lt. Larry Niren and Lt. Bob Farrell, union president, will be negotiating for the officers' contract, and Mike Ber-shel and Pat Patituccio will represent the firefighters.

Key points which the city and union have disagreed upon during past negotiations include incentive pay for Emergency Medical Technicians, compensation for firefighters riding out of grade and holidays.

"We're still going for basically the same things as before," said Niren. He added that the union will also ask that the city extend to fire employees the new floating holiday which it recently approved for all other city employees.

Niren and other union representatives met with the assistant city manager/personnel director, John Lit-ton, last week and began establishing ground rules for the negotiations. The actual negotiations should begin within the next month, said Niren.

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