

Winter Park firemen's union, city to start negotiations

By MISSY CLARK

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WINTER PARK—The local firefighters' union and city management are going to begin collective bargaining this week regarding the terms of Winter Park Firefighters' contract.

The firefighters' current contract, which was signed last year after a stand-off and dispute that lasted nearly two years, expires in September.

And while union representatives declined to discuss the terms of their new proposal prior to Friday's meeting — "we don't want to let the cat out of the bag yet," said one — they did say they were looking forward to negotiating with the new members of city management.

Interim city manager Phyllis

Allison, human resources director Pat Moran and other department heads representing the city in contract negotiations were not here last year.

"It's going to be a whole new ball game, and I think the first meeting is going to set the tone of the negotiations," said Lt. Larry Niren, vice president of the local firefighters' union.

Meanwhile, the management team is gearing up for the negotiations by taking a closer look at its choice of labor attorneys.

The city's current labor attorney, Robin Fawsett, recently submitted a proposal for his services. And while city commissioners say they have been pleased with Fawsett's work over the years and would be inclined to continue using him, Allison pointed out that his fees are much higher than those charged by other labor attorneys in the area.

After surveying other local government entities regarding their

labor attorney services, Allison suggested Winter Park may want to consider changing labor attorneys. The city has received a proposal from David Kornreich of the firm Muller, Mintz, Kornreich, Caldwell, Casey, Crosland & Bramnick, P.A.

After discussing the issue at Monday's work session, however, commissioners decided that with only a few days to go before contract negotiations begin, the city should stick with Fawsett through the current negotiations. Following the close of the negotiations, the commission will further examine attorneys' fee proposals and consider changing labor attorneys.

In addition to union contract negotiations, the city uses the services of its labor attorney on issues such as employee discharges, complaints, charges filed through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the Human Rights Commission.