

City of Winter Park
Civil Service
Fire Department

Amendments allow Winter Park firefighters time off for school

By Yvonne C.T. Vassel

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — The city's Civil Service Board has approved amendments to fire department policies on leave time, forced overtime and time off for

attending school.

Because of controversy about the resignation of firefighter Daniel Bennett in February, Fire Chief Mike Molthop said the policies needed to be refined. Bennett resigned after being denied time off from his 24-hour shifts to attend school.

Molthop said he believes the changes will allow

employees to further their education while enabling the department to operate without disruption of duty schedules and training programs.

The amendments state that:

■ Vacation leave can only be used with prior approval of the chief or assistant chief, and authorization will not be given until the time is earned and

credited to the employee. Also, a firefighter can take off part of a 24-hour shift and credit it to vacation time only once per calendar month.

Molthop said those changes will prevent firefighters regularly using portions of their shift time to attend classes not approved by the department.

If a firefighter is forced to work overtime to fill in for a person taking off part of a shift, the substitute will leave work as soon as the regularly scheduled person arrives.

Molthop said past policy gave employees the op-

tion of working a full 24-hour shift if they had to work overtime.

■ Any educational class that would interrupt an employee's regular shift must be coordinated and approved in advance by the chief or assistant chief. Any class that does not conflict with the duty schedule does not need such approval.

Classes that would interrupt duty time and are not job-related will not be approved for employees who have worked for the department less than three years.

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