

City of Winter Park  
Civil Service  
(1974)  
Fire Chief  
Finlayson

# Civil Service Report To Exonerate Fire Chief

By ROSEMARY SIMMS

Sentinel Star Staff

WINTER PARK — Civil Service Board chairman, Dr. Don Tillery, will report to the city commission Monday concerning the board's ruling exonerating Fire Chief Robert Finlayson of all allegations of poor administration.

The report will be made at the city commission work session beginning at 4 p.m. in city hall conference room 109.

ACCORDING TO Acting City Manager Bob Proctor the report will be received for discussion only. Formal action will probably be taken at Tuesday's regular commission meeting beginning at 4:30 p.m. in commission chambers.

Commission action will be to confirm or — with at least a 4-1 vote — amend or overrule the Civil

Service Board's decision "there is not competent, substantial evidence to support any charges of misconduct."

Proctor — who made the allegations against Chief Finlayson and urged the board to investigate — said he was "very happy that the Civil Service Board investigated the allegations and that the matter is coming to a conclusion."

PROCTOR SAID he preferred to withhold further comment until the city commission receives and acts on the board's decision.

Chief Finlayson, fired March 20 by former City Manager Frank Wooten and reinstated March 27 by the city commission, was investigated by the board at the insistence of Proctor and city commission.

The investigation report, prepared by the board's chief examiner, John Schmidt, did not include statements

from Wooten, who drew criticism from the commission over the dismissal of Finlayson. Wooten has since resigned.

THE PROBE by Schmidt directed itself to five areas. The allegations and Schmidt's findings included:

- The charge of mishandling a fire which destroyed Old Lyman Hall at Rollins College was not substantiated.

- A charge the chief released reports to the news media was true. However, the statement released did not appear to be "out of place."

- An allegation the chief did not cooperate with the city commission during its meetings wasn't supported.

- A charge of mishandling bid specifications for a fire truck was found to be false.

- Allegations the chief did not follow procedures of the city mana-

ger could not be determined since Wooten refused to comment.

THE DOWNTOWN parking study report will be submitted to commission during Monday's meeting.

In a recent preliminary report to the city commission, the Winter Park downtown parking committee proposed construction of tiered parking garages on the three city owned parking lots west of the railroad tracks to relieve parking shortages.

The report also recommended providing close parking areas for employees who work along Park Avenue. If the convenient parking spaces are made available to short-term public users as opposed to long-term employees, it would "contribute greatly to the growth of a healthy and thriving business district" and alleviate traffic congestion since there will not be lines of drivers circling the downtown area,



ROBERT FINLAYSON

... Fire chief

the report says.

ANOTHER item on Monday's agenda will be discussion of whether or not to continue with an environmental education center in Mead Garden.

A one-year trial basis agreement between Winter Park and the Orange County Board of Public Instruction and the Junior League of Orlando is up and must be renewed if the project is to continue.

The program, for Orange County sixth graders, suffered a setback for several months when the energy crisis brought buses which transported children to the garden to a halt.

THE CONTRACT agreement permits use of the gardens, owned by the city and the building located on the property to conduct environmental classrooms primarily for but not limited to sixth graders in the public school system.

It also provides during the normal school year, the board will conduct no more than one class per day during week days, except for school holidays. Each class must be limited to 35 students or less. No money will be required of the city to make the building suitable for classroom instruction.

The contract stipulates the school board will be responsible for the operation of the center, all operational costs and supervision.

THE JUNIOR League agreed to contribute \$7,000 toward the salary of the environmental instructor for the school year. Additionally, the League's part in the agreement included furnishing one or more volunteers to work closely with the teacher in establishment of the program.

Board appointments will also be decided at the work session. Expiring terms on both the Winter Park Art Festival Committee and the city housing authority must be filled.

In the Winter Park Housing Authority, terms of chairwoman Kelly Pflug and member John Heddens are up. On the art festival committee, terms expire for Chairman Keith Reeves and members Jack Dunathan, William Hobby, Gretchen Hobby and Mrs. Robert Throm.

Other items on the work session agenda include:

- Bid tabulations on: A new fire truck, for which bids were received previously and rejected after complaints were registered by manufacturers who claimed they could not meet specifications.

- A well in Cady Way Park.

- A well for irrigation and green colored chain link fencing for Lake Baldwin Park; and a revision for construction of bicycle paths along one edge of Piney Wood Cemetery to allow cyclists to get to Lake Baldwin Park without having to use the busy road.

- A progress report and another alteration of construction plans for the Lakemont Avenue improvements and bicycle paths.

- An elevation sketch of the Kraft Azalea Gardens lift station will be presented to the commission.

- Discussion of the Orange County Commission request of Winter Park to permit Manor Care, Inc., to hook up to the city's sewer system because of its close proximity. Winter Park officials denied a request by Manor Care to annex and zone property off Howell Branch Road for a nursing home because of lack of sewer capacity. Manor Care then requested a package sewer plant as a temporary solution.

- Public Works Director Jo Compton will propose an aluminum can recycling program as requested by the city commission. The Environmental Control Board recommended the city launch such a program.

W.P. Sentinel  
6/9/74