

# City promises fire chief full-time training officer

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OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

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WINTER PARK — Fire Chief Mike Molthop was promised Wednesday he would get something he has long fought for — a full-time fire training officer.

"I'll believe it when I see it Oct. 1 [the start of the 1986 budget]," said Molthop after a city commission budget workshop.

To make the new position palatable to the budget-conscious commission, Molthop proposed eliminating one of the department's two fire inspector slots and using that money to pay for the training officer.

The fire prevention bureau has a fire marshal and two fire inspectors, but it has been operating with one inspector since the other one resigned July 26.

Molthop said the effect of eliminating the full-time inspector's post would be reduced if three firefighters go to school and get state certification as fire inspectors. One of these firefighters-fire inspectors

then would be assigned to each of the department's three shifts and be paid an additional \$1,500.

With the new plan a fire inspector would be on duty at all times and the other inspector who works a regular eight-hour daily shift would rarely be called out after hours to inspect fire scenes, Molthop said. This should save the department about \$2,000 in overtime.

The inspector's salary was \$21,359 and the new training officer would be paid \$25,996. The department has a part-time training officer whose overtime pay next year would be about \$17,000.

If the chief's plan for a trainer is used it would cost the city \$34,881. If things remain as they are it would cost the city \$44,153.

The fire prevention bureau reviews all building plans and requests for occupation licenses, inspects businesses at least once a year for violations, conducts public education programs, oversees fire safety at hospitals and nursing homes and investigates the causes of fires.

"The fire prevention bureau is great. I'm just try-

ing to look at the department as a whole and satisfying all the needs," said Molthop. "I want to give everyone the proper training to perform their jobs in a safe and proper manner. I feel that's what we can accomplish with this plan."

Molthop said services provided by the bureau probably will decline a bit. For example, most inspections of businesses are done twice a year. That could drop to once annually.

The city commissioners, who had balked at creating the new position, expressed approval of Molthop's plan.

"I think the chief has come up with a good offer to give us a training officer without significantly hurting the fire prevention program," said City Manager David Harden.

Commissioner David Johnston said he liked the idea of having a fire inspector on each shift.

"Another sidelight is it does provide some career opportunity," said Commissioner Gary Brewer.



Molthop