

Fire fighters, Winter Park agree on contract

By MARY R. HEFFRON

Representatives of the Winter Park fire fighters' union and the city have agreed on a two-year contract for the city's fire fighters.

The contract still must be approved by the union membership and by the city commission.

Agreement on the contract came late last week, after seven months of intermittent negotiations. It includes a provision that it can be "reopened" after a year to discuss wages and also includes a management rights clause specifying the city's control over work schedules, layoffs, suspensions, hirings and firings.

THE CONTRACT DOES not include the fire fighters' right to picket, which was the last item to be agreed on in the negotiations.

Fire fighters' representatives also did not press two of the more controversial points they had asked for during the bargaining: a work week reduced from 56 hours to 50 hours and time and a half overtime pay for hours worked over 50.

That request went through several

revisions. Union representatives suggested in April that their work week be cut to 42 hours, with 10-and 14-hour days interspersed with two days' off.

UNION PRESIDENT Michael Molthop said at the time the union would forfeit the overtime pay request if it could get the 42-hour plan, which is used by the Orlando Fire Department.

In the 56-hour work week, fire fighters work 24 hours and then get 48 hours off

for an average of 56 work hours a week over a month.

The union later modified its proposal to a 50-hour week, with overtime. The fire fighters are paid at a straight time rate for overtime hours. But that request also was dropped after the city refused to agree to it.

THE CITY AGREED fire fighters would get a minimum of three hours' pay

if they are called in to work other than their regular shifts, and to pay fire fighters working as paramedics an extra \$520 a year.

The extra pay is conditional on the city's completing an agreement with Orange County and Dr. Charles C. Hall, chairman of the county's emergency medical services advisory board, and will be withheld until the fire fighter has worked as a paramedic for a year.

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Firemen, City Come To Terms; Contract Approval Likely Soon

After eight months of bargaining, Winter Park Firefighters Local 1598 and the City of Winter Park reached an agreement on a two-year contract Thursday.

Union members were expected to have ratified the contract yesterday. City labor attorney Robin Fawcett predicted Thursday the city commission would approve the final contract after union ratification.

Firefighters were successful in having a wage reopener clause included in the contract, but not a clause which would have firefighters included in any cost-of-living or across-the-board pay increase for other city employees.

Under the wage reopener clause, firefighters can reopen salary negotiations in June or July, 60 to 90 days before the end of this fiscal year.

Firefighters failed to have included in the contract several articles they had

proposed during negotiations, including a shorter work week, the right to picket, an 8 per cent cost of living raise, and a less restrictive political activity policy.

"We're not overjoyed," firefighter union representative Mike Molthop said about the final contract. Molthop, however, predicted a positive response by firefighters to the contract because "I think they understand we've come up with the best we could under the circumstances."

Articles that firefighters were successful in getting in the contract included improved jury duty policy, emergency leave, minimum three hours pay when off-duty firefighters are called into work, and removal of the limitation on the amount of times fire department personnel can swap their shifts.

Firefighters also won city approval of a sick leave award system and additional pay for fighters who have

completed advanced Emergency Medical Technician (EMTII) training.

The sick leave system awards extra vacation time to firefighters who take less than 48 hours sick leave in a year. The union proposed that article to cut down on the amount of sick leave used in the department.

Once the department EMT II program is underway again, those firefighters who are certified as EMT IIs and who have been assigned to that position will get \$520 after each year they serve, under that article of the contract.

Assistant city manager and personnel director Rick Fitzgerald called the contract "a good contract—for both the city and the firefighters." Fitzgerald said that if the firefighters ratify the contract, the city commission will probably review it at Monday's work session and vote on it on Tuesday.