

Duluth - Feb. 14, 1985

Suspended firefighter is back on the job

By VICTOR ASSERSON

Firefighter Dan Bennett, who was suspended last Tuesday and told he would be fired for going to school while on vacation, was back on the job Friday morning.

That was when Bennett, a three-year veteran with the Winter Park Fire Department, was due to see assistant city manager John Litton for discussions on his future.

But on Thursday at about 1 p.m. Litton called him, said Bennett, and told him that Fire

Chief Mike Moltrop had dropped the threat to fire him and there was no need to meet in Litton's office Friday.

Sixteen of Bennett's colleagues, including shift captains and lieutenants, protested Tuesday last week to members of the Civil Service Board about the rule, which prohibited firefighters from using vacation time to attend school.

Bennett, who was prepared to go to the Friday meeting with his lawyer, said that when he spoke to Moltrop on Friday morning Moltrop had told him that he was dropping the threat to fire him but suggested that Bennett should forego a day's vacation, but Bennett refused to accept that punishment and the whole matter had been dropped.

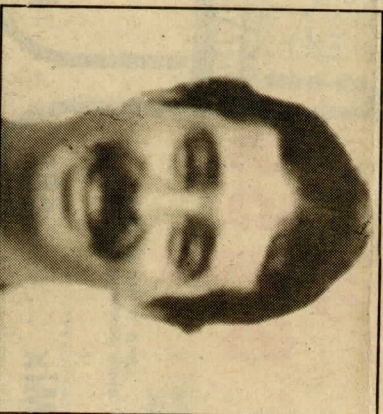
Moltrop, who introduced the new vacation rule, said Monday: "I have a memo out to the staff to review the standard operating procedure and they will evaluate the department's needs and we will go back to the next civil service board meeting."

"Obviously I believe in education or we wouldn't be in the training program or as involved in other programs as much as we are."

Bennett said Tuesday that he had put in a request to Moltrop to continue his schooling and he was waiting for a reply.

"I think that this situation was mishandled but at least now there is the chance to review the standard operating procedure."

"Too many people have had to leave in the past because of this rule," said Bennett.



Dan Bennett