

(Winter Park)
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Finlayson's
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Firing Tops

Special Meet

By ROSEMARY SIMMSTAR

Sentinel Star Staff

WINTER PARK — Civil Service Board (CSB) Chairman Don Tillery has called a special meeting at 7:30 p.m. today in city hall conference room 109 to consider a request from Acting City Manager Bob Proctor to terminate Fire Chief Bob Finlayson.

Proctor Friday asked the CSB to investigate complaints against Finlayson, who was fired March 20 by City Manager Frank Wooten and later reinstated by the city commission.

WOOTEN, who resigned April 1 effective July 3, drew criticism from the commission when it rescinded his order firing Finlayson and the commission referred any complaints to the CSB.

In a letter to Tillery, Proctor said it would be "in the best interests of the city, the fire department and Finlayson if he were to terminate his employment with the city."

If Finlayson does not resign, Proctor added, the board should initiate procedures to remove him.

PROCTOR LISTED Finlayson's problems as:

- An inability to communicate tactfully and effectively with the city manager and the city commission.

- An apparent reluctance to cooperate fully with other senior city employees in several instances.

- A lack of good judgment in some instances.

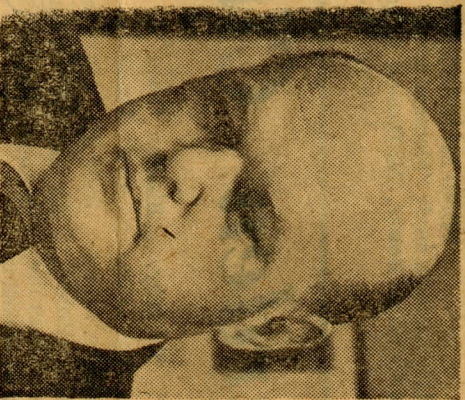
PROCTOR SAID the items may seem insignificant individually, but collectively, "They add up to pose a serious problem to the efficient and smooth operation of this city's government."

Proctor's reasons differed with those of Wooten, who charged Finlayson took a "secret" vacation day off, gave out press releases without permission, and failed to give proper reports to the city commission.

Finlayson claims Wooten did not tell him why he was fired. He also claims Wooten said the action was



BOB FINLAYSON
... Fire chief



BOB PROCTOR
... Requests termination

a directive of the city commission. At least three commissioners said they did not know the firing was going to take place when it did.

FINLAYSON, who retained attorney Dario Icardi to represent him, maintains he is not guilty of any charge other than trying to bring the best possible fire protection to the citizens of Winter Park.

Following the firing, Tillery told the commission there was a definite lack of communication between the city manager's office and the CSB. He said it was highly unusual the fire chief would be dismissed when there had been no indication previously a problem existed.