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'Confusion' Over Kroeger Salary Report Delays City Workers' Pay Hikes

"Confusion" over an outside personnel firm's salary report has delayed civil service commission action on proposed pay schedules for city employees.

Saying he was "confused" by the pay scales suggested by the firm of Louis J. Kroeger associates, City Manager Robert Klein last night told the commission the report will have to be re-evaluated before he can make recommendations to the civil service body.

"I'm sorry we're in this predicament," Klein apologized at a special commission meeting.

Thus the third and final portion of the Kroeger survey struck a snag after the two previous reports—on job classifications and allocations—had been approved by both the commission and city council.

Klein said the difficulty is that the salary report bears on direct relation to current pay schedules and therefore he is in no position to advise the commission just how much the Kroeger recommendations would cost if they are adopted.

The city manager's office will work with Kroeger consultants to match the recommendations against present pay schedules in time for the commission to report to the council at next week's city budget hearings, Klein said.

Chairman Thomas Twohig and Commissioners William Muriale and Archie Schwieso, the three members of the board, agreed to this course and deferred action until the problem is resolved.

Charles Doud, Kroeger consultant who played a major part in compilation of the \$23000 report, estimated the recommendations would add about 10 per cent next year to the \$1,063,341 budgeted for salaries for the present fiscal year ending June 30.

However, the issue is not as clearcut as that, Klein told the commission.

First, he said, the Kroeger firm must spell out in black and white just how much it will cost to implement the job classification recommendations upgrading some city employees.

When that figure has been worked out according to the present pay table, any Kroeger recommendations for pay increases must also be stated in direct relation to current payroll costs, Klein said.

The Kroeger firm has evolved a completely new classification—pay structure with no definite point of departure from the salary schedules now in effect, Klein said.

The city manager said he cannot intelligently advise the commission when he is not equipped with a program predicated on the existing salary structure.

Another beclouding aspect is financial uncertainty.

Klein said the commission must determine the cost of meeting the pay increases to be received by employees upgraded to higher classifications.

When that is accomplished the commission can proceed to a decision on whether the pay in each classification should be raised, and if so, how much.

The city may be financially incapable of putting the Kroeger program into effect in its entirety this year, leaving it to the commission and council to reach a decision that lies "somewhere in between" today's pay scale and the Kroeger recommendations, Klein said.

The city civil service employees association clearly favors the Kroeger report regardless of whether it can be effected during the next fiscal year.

The Kroeger findings represent a goal the employees hope can be achieved "ultimately," President James Slater declared.

Under questioning by Commissioner Muriale, Slater acknowledged that the program as recommended may have to be deferred up to a year or more.

"That's up to the commission," Slater said.

Chairman Twohig said he will call the group into special session as soon as Klein's office and the Kroeger firm can agree on a salary foundation.

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