

Santa Cruz S

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THURSDAY, AFTERNOON, JUNE 27, 1968

City, County Pay Hikes Approved

Union Grumbles

By Don Righetti
Sentinel Staff Writer

"It's rotten."

"It stinks."

Those were the loudest opinions voiced by Santa Cruz City employes last night on the city council's approval of an average 4 per cent pay increase for the coming year.

The workers walked out of the session to hold an impromptu union meeting in front of the council chambers. The talk was of a strike, but it was readily apparent the union doesn't have the beef to back up a general walkout.

City worker membership in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal employes was never much more than half the total city work force and it now has dwindled to somewhere near the one-third mark. Union officials will not divulge the exact figure.

When union representative Robert McLane called last night's meeting, only a handful of workers followed him outside.

Those who did expressed their contempt of fellow workers who have deserted union causes. They decided that if they haven't the power to effect a general walkout, they might train their guns on a single employe department—possibly refuse pickup where a workstoppage would make itself immediately felt.

Another idea bandied about was the picketing of next year's Miss California Pageant to draw attention to the workers' dissatisfaction.

The session ended with an agreement to hold a meeting at 7:30 a.m. Monday at the city corpor-

(Continued on Page 2)

Tax Rate Holds

By Wallace Wood
Sentinel Staff Writer

"We should be able to hold the tax rate, or even cut it a little bit."

With these words the county administrative officer, Carl Millar, congratulated the Board of Supervisors last night as they adopted the last items in the 1968-69 county budget. Approval was unanimous.

Though an exact tally won't come from the county auditor until next week, an unofficial total by the assistant county administrative officer, Art Alexander, puts the cuts made by supervisors during the hearings at just over \$700,000.

If confirmed, this would more than offset an expected 25-cent tax rate increase predicted by Millar in his preliminary budget.

Most of the cuts came in the roads budget.

Supervisors approved about \$500,000 in salary increases for virtually all of the county's 950 employes. Only new jobs didn't come in for the increases, which averaged close to 7½ per cent.

The county's top elected and appointed officials got 10 per cent raises. But most of the raises won't go into effect until the next term of office for the elective officials.

Supervisor Robert Burton voted against the 10 per cent raises for the top group. He reminded the board that the last time raises were voted they became effective immediately because of a wartime salary raise clause in the state constitution. The clause apparently is still there, but supervisors did not discuss the question.

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Union Grumbles At City Pay Plan

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ation yard to plot a course of action.

The workers' unhappiness came near the end of a budget session in which the employees were granted the largest package of benefits in the city's history, according to City Manager Dave Koester. The program will cost the city approximately \$200,000.

It includes pay raises for 90 per cent of the employees, added health and life insurance and other fringe benefits, added retirement benefits and special benefits for the police and fire departments.

Pay hikes range from no increase for 26 employees to 7.5 per cent raises. The average raise is 4 per cent, with the total wage increase amounting to \$112,000.

McLane had held out for a 5 per cent across-the-board increase in addition to the staggered raises recommended by City Personnel Director Joe Ringrose.

The union man charged the city has an "If you don't like it,

you can leave" attitude which is damaging to workers' morale. In return, he said, the employee adopts an attitude of "Then I don't have to do my best."

The city civil service commission, headed by Chairman Denver Groff, had recommended a 2.5 per cent across-the-board raise, on a funds-available basis, in addition to Ringrose's pay raise schedule.

The council last night determined to put the amount of the 2.5 per cent hike into added retirement benefits, rather than a

straight salary raise.

It was the first talk the workers had heard of a retirement plan change, and McLane labled the move as "a ruse to avoid paying wages."

By that time, the public hearing portion of the meeting had been closed and the employees were not allowed to protest against the change of events.

McLane turned to his union members and said, "Tell them what you think of it anyway."

"It's rotten."

"It stinks," they said.

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