

Santa Cruz Approves 1981-82 City Budget Of \$37.3 Million

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The city's 1981-82 budget was adopted unanimously Tuesday by the Santa Cruz City Council . . . then Mayor Joseph Ghio and his colleagues fidgeted embarrassingly when they had to admit they did not know the amount of the multi-million dollar document they had adopted.

Ghio said the City Council had gone over and over the budget during the past few weeks, but finally asked Robert Shepherd, Santa Cruz finance director, for the budget total.

Shepherd said he would be able to

answer that question Wednesday morning.

Shepherd told The Sentinel today that the 1981-82 budget total is \$37.3 million, exclusive of provisions for salary and fringe benefit increases for the city's general workers, middle management workers and executives.

The city's general workers turned out in force Tuesday evening to protest that they are now working without a contract and have no assurance of one at this time.

Ghio said of the dispute over wages and fringe benefits: "The City Council is fully aware of the issues, is well aware of the union proposal. We feel we have made a fair and practical proposal and that we

should reach an agreement soon."

George Stavis, president of the Santa Cruz chapter of Local 415 of the Service Employees International Union, told the City Council, in part:

"It is with considerable sadness and great reluctance that I address you this evening . . . We are here tonight to share our concern and disappointment that we have been working without a contract for the past two weeks. We are uncomfortable with our situation and hope that the council and its negotiating team will work with us to come to a mutually satisfactory contract in the immediate future."

The chapter represents some 300 gener-

al city workers as bargaining agent in negotiations with the city. Kent-Rice, city personnel director, is the city's chief negotiator. Last week a state mediator was called in to help resolve the apparent impasse in the negotiations.

Stavis told the City Council: "Since 1972, city workers have lost 18.9 percent of their purchasing power to inflation. No contract in that period has met the cost of living, and the pattern has been a slow, steady erosion of our living standards."

Stavis said that the members are paid between \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year, with the average salary between \$15,000 and \$16,000. He noted that the Bureau of Labor

Statistics indicates that a family of four needs \$16,000 a year to live in the Santa Cruz area at a "lower" level and needs \$25,000 a year to live at a moderate level.

"None of the employees in our unit are being compensated at a moderate level," Stavis said.

A sanitation worker, James Porter, said the city has offered a 9 percent increase and "that doesn't give us anything with double-digit inflation. Our ability to buy stuff has gone down every year. Santa Cruz doesn't look like it's going broke and it's not fair to rip us off."