

Health Insurance Policy Reversed By City Council

By John Wheeler

A possible sharp rift between the city council and civil service association may come out of last night's decision in a long-brewing insurance squabble.

In a 4-3 vote councilmen overruled the recommendation of the civil service commission and ordered the new group health insurance plan written with the city as policy holder.

Some employees have voiced fear that with the city council in control, political pressure might be brought in the selection of a policy and naming of brokers in later years.

Police Lt. Sam Taylor, president of the civil service association, said a special meeting of the group's executive committee would be scheduled for tonight.

"Personally, I don't think there is any problem this year. We have what we want in the way of a

policy. Even though there is no problem this year, we will use whatever means are necessary to get the best policy and what we want when it all comes up again next year. This may not be the same thing the council wants," Taylor added.

Some employees have discussed refusing the council's \$3 per month contribution and thus removing the council from the picture. "If we pay the full cost of the insurance, then we certainly ought to have all the decisions," one employee said.

Beginning in January, the city budget included \$3 per month per employee as a contribution to the employees' health insurance plan. Because of the city contribution, a majority of the council voted to take the plan over to maintain controls.

Voting for council control were Councilmen Paul Forgey, Richard Farrar, Robert Burton and Kermit McGrahnan. Against were Councilmen Harold Carriger, Dr. Ted Foster and Mayor Adrian Jensen.

Councilmen who wanted the policy in the city's name generally argued it was the only way the council could exert direct control over its contributions (about \$8000 per year total) and that the question also involved principle.

Councilman Carriger said, "I've already been approached several times by insurance men. There has been quite a bit of political pressure on this thing and that's the reason I prefer the employees hold this policy."

Most councilmen reported having been contacted by members of the local life underwriters insurance group. The group has argued the employees' policy should be written in the city's name and contracted for locally rather than out-of-the-city as it was this year.

