

Supervisors Reluctantly Okay 5 Per Cent County Pay Boost

2/14/65

Although not convinced that the blanket increase is the best solution, the board of supervisors yesterday unanimously approved a 5 per cent across-the-board increase in pay for Santa Cruz county employees the coming fiscal year.

The one step boost, costing an estimated total of \$125,000, will not affect elected county department heads and a few department heads out of civil service.

In approving the salary increase, the board bypassed the recommendation of Administrative Officer Richard O'Reilly to not give a pay boost and accepted the recommendation of the civil service commission.

The board accepted the CAO recommendation to earmark \$25,000 in the general fund for making salary adjustments in jobs not properly classified. A recommendation by Board Chairman Lewis Nelson to have the civil service commission make a study to determine whether elected officials and the few personnel out of civil service should have pay raises was unanimously approved by the board.

An additional 5 per cent increase was approved for the following jobs: Public health dentist, assistant district attorney, chief assistant district attorney, assistant county counsel I and assistant county counsel II.

Faced with the problem that there are many job classifications out of line in relation to the pay scale, the board was not fully convinced that the blanket increase was the solution for straightening out the salaries.

O'Reilly has contended that a blanket increase is the "easy way out" for restoring job classifica-

tions to their proper level.

Supervisors Vincent Locatelli, Mrs. Hulda McLean and Nelson argued that the best way to grant pay increases is on an individual basis and not use the blanket method. The merit system will put salaries now out of line on a more even keel, they believe.

Complaining that there was no reason for a department head to receive a larger pay increase than workers in the lower brackets was Locatelli.

Realizing that there are inequities in salaries and they could not be realigned right away, supervisors went along with the commission recommendation for an increase.

Supervisors Francis Silliman and Walter G. Merrill were strongly in favor of the increase. The pair contended the county would fall behind other neighboring counties in wages for employees.

An average 17½ per cent increase was granted by the board in 1957. The average boost was aimed at employees who did not have salaries raised by recent amendments to the salary ordinance.

Last year a 5 per cent raise was authorized by the board for approximately 80 per cent of the county employees.

