

# SC Council Ratifies 6.5 Per Cent Pay Increases

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Previously announced pay and fringe benefits increases amounting to about 6.5 per cent were ratified by the Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday for the city administration, the miscellaneous (general) employees and the firefighters.

The percentage increase is figured on the total payroll for these groups, according to Dwane Milnes, assistant city manager.

The pay packages are for fiscal 1977-78.

The city police department is still negotiating with the city for a 1977-78 pay package, Kent Rice, Santa Cruz personnel director, said Tuesday.

And that was all he said, in keeping with an arrangement whereby both the parties in salary negotiations withhold comment to the press.

The council action Tuesday was unanimous on the pay and fringe benefits hikes for the general employees and the firefighters.

However, Councilwoman Carole DePalma opposed a 6.5 per cent hike for management,

saying such across-the-board increases "come to too much money."

DePalma said she favored granting management "a flat dollar amount." And she asserted she objects to the across-the-board raise for these because in terms of actual dollars they would get what would be the equivalent of 11.5 per cent raises for others.

Councilwoman Charlotte Melville contended in rebuttal:

"I don't consider that 6.5 per cent is a raise so much as it is a way of keeping up with the cost of living. I think inflation hits

management, too. And I think that the cost of living has exceeded the amount and that all we are doing is helping to keep them even.

"It's almost our obligation to see they are not impoverished."

DePalma said it was unfair, in her opinion, to put the ratification of management raises in the same resolution with the general employees and firefighters.

She got the resolution separated and joined with Mayor Joseph Ghio, Vice Mayor Larry Edler, Bert Muhly, Jim Ham-

mond and Melville in approving the raises for the general employees and firefighters.

Then on the management raises DePalma was on the short end of a 5 to 1 vote ratifying those raises.

Councilman John Mahaney joined the meeting just after the final vote.

Basically, the pay packages agreed to seem more different than they actually are in terms of the bottom-line percentage increases.

The city firefighters get \$62 monthly pay hikes, improved health benefits that include city payment of the increased health insurance cost for the workers and city payment of about two-thirds the health costs for dependents on a dollar-amount basis.

The new pay range for firefighters is from \$12,780 to \$15,192 per year. For fire captains it is \$14,808 to \$17,712 per year.

The miscellaneous workers get a 5 per cent pay increase, with some 36 lower echelon workers getting from 2 to 4 per

cent more to bring up their basic low pay. They get all increases in health benefits paid for them, plus \$7 monthly for their dependents. There is also a dental plan that has lower costs for dependents.

City cost for these workers will be \$181,000 for salaries, \$32,000 for the special raises and \$3,500 for the dental plan.

No breakdown of the 6.5 per cent increase for the city administration and department heads was given, but the council indicated it was much the same pay package given to the miscellaneous workers.