

MAY 16, 1975

Pursuant to a call by the Mayor, the City Council of the City of Idaho Falls met in special session in the Council Chambers in the City Building, Idaho Falls, Idaho, on Friday, May 16th, 1975, at 10:00 o'clock a.m. for the purpose of considering and deciding any and all issues concerning collective bargaining and the striking by the employees of the City. There were present at said meeting: Mayor S. Eddie Pedersen, Councilmen Gil Karst, Paul Hovey, Jim Freeman, Mel Erickson, and Ralph Wood. Absent: Councilman Norris Gesas. Also present: Velma Chandler, Deputy City Clerk; Arthur Smith, City Attorney and all available Division Directors.

The Mayor presented the following news release:

NEWS RELEASE

As we approach the end of the third week since 148 City employees have seen fit to strike against their City Government, the situation draws more critical.

I am impressed that just this week the Mayor of New York called upon the President of the United States for immediate emergency financial aid of some billion and a half dollars to bail their City out of their dilemma. However, I am also reminded of the opening remarks that I made in my brief budget message to the Council that "It is apparent that this administration will not be a party to any financial chaos". We accept our duty and responsibility to provide the services necessary to the taxpayer at a prudent and sound cost level.

Through this crisis, it has been the policy of the Mayor and Council as a whole, that the Chairman of the Fiscal Committee should be given the responsibility of official releases of their actions, in order that we might curb rumors and still give the public the information to which they are so entitled.

Yesterday, one bright spot appeared on the horizon, the documented contract was signed by the firefighters union and myself, which is the evidence of their willingness to accept as part of their job their duty as it relates to the welfare of the citizens of our various communities.

The paramedics portion of the fire service has evolved to filling a great need the City and Bonneville County has recognized existed.

The City job descriptions were drawn up before the innovation of paramedics and it is my recommendation at this time, as soon as feasible, that specific job descriptions be drawn for these highly professionally skilled men.

The policy of the City Administration has, for a quarter of a century, been to support the right of unified City employee negotiations. At this time, however, we feel that a compulsory membership in any labor organization should not be a mandatory condition of employment.

We encourage their association with any union to act as an agency shop with the City withholding their dues to the union of their choice.

I am sure the City Council recognizes that every City employee on strike has been holding his job because of his competency. Political patronage has long been removed from our philosophy.

MAY 16, 1975

We are proud of our Police Department and have repeatedly said that we felt that it was the best one in the area.

A proposition has come to the City Council from 9 private contractors to take over the sanitation department. As I stated to these contractors, I will restate to you, that we in no way will use them or this fine group of employees in a bluff to gain our position.

The Sanitation Department will average about 13,000 pick ups per week and my office receives less than 13 complaints per year and the cost for residents, regardless of the number of cans, in less than .58 per week. It would be difficult to beat.

This is an unusual and rough year on our streets and next year we feel it would be advisable to have some major repairs done by private contractors. We have such a brief season conducive to efficient street repairs. We have plenty of work left for the regular street maintenance and other anticipated duties they fill, such as fighting what looks like an inevitable flood.

I could go on speaking as highly of all the other employees, such as Airport, Parks and Electrical Divisions and others, and during this crunch of uncontrolled inflation, we have not lost sight of the fine services they perform.

The one thing that stands out clearly today is the gratitude we owe the majority of City employees who are attempting to maintain a semblance of service with such a drop in available personnel.

Words cannot express our total feeling of appreciation to the Bonneville County Sheriff's office for the effort they have expended in the public behalf.

The general public has been so patient and are understanding of the fact that we are attempting to try to be fair and not over-burden them with taxes.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Councilman Karst was invited by the Mayor to explain, in detail, the reasons the Mayor and Council felt this news release was necessary at this time.

City Attorney, Arthur Smith, was asked by the Mayor to discuss the legal aspects of the decisions surrounding collective bargaining and the strikers.

It was moved by Councilman Karst, seconded by Freeman, that the previous informal action of the City Council in directing the Chief of Police to order all striking members of the Police Department to return to work or be terminated, be approved and ratified. Roll call as follows: Ayes, 5; No, none; carried.

There being no further business, it was moved by Councilman Karst, seconded by Freeman, that the meeting adjourn at 10:40 a.m., carried.

ATTEST: s/ Velma Chandler
Deputy City Clerk

s/ S. Eddie Pedersen
Mayor

* * * * *