

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 148

**Minneapolis City
Review of Fire and Police Pay & Work
Policies**

November 1962

Citizens League of Minneapolis
and Hennepin County
545 Mobil Oil Building
Minneapolis 2, Minnesota

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APPROVED
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DATE NOV 7 1962

REPORT FROM: Citizens League Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Proposed independent review of Minneapolis fire and police pay and work policies.

BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The rejection by the voters of Minneapolis yesterday of proposed Charter Amendment #18 does not necessarily reflect voter satisfaction with the present pay or working conditions of Minneapolis firemen and policemen. The rejection of the proposed amendment merely indicates that the voters of Minneapolis do not wish these pay policies to be incorporated in the city charter, at least not at the minimum levels provided for under the formula contained in Amendment #18. The basic question of whether present pay levels are fair and adequate remains unanswered.

During the course of the discussion of the merits of Amendment #18, several important policy questions were raised, questions the answers to which either continue in dispute or have not been provided satisfactorily. It is important that answers to these questions be found, both from the standpoint of the general public and Minneapolis firemen and policemen themselves. These questions include the following:

1. What is an adequate pay for Minneapolis firemen and policemen? How should the pay of firemen and policemen be related to that of other city employees and to that paid firemen and policemen in other cities?

The 1953 Minneapolis City Council-appointed Citizens Salary Survey Commission made both a majority and a minority recommendation. The majority recommended that the maximum pay rate for patrolmen and firefighters should be based on the midpoint between the rate of pay for permanently-employed laborers in outside employment and the average rate of pay for building trades craftsmen under the jurisdiction of the City Council. The minority report recommended that the maximum rate of pay should be 85% of the average construction trade rate in the AGC contracts for bricklayer, carpenter, electrician, pipefitter, plumber, sheet metal worker, structural iron worker, roofer and painter.

The City Council subsequently adopted the minority recommendation as its guiding policy, with the modification that the Council would base its comparison on wage rates of municipal employees in these crafts, rather than workers in private industry. During the past few years the pay of firemen and policemen, in accordance with this policy, has remained relatively close to 85% of the pay of the city employees in these eight crafts.

The fire and police union leadership, on the other hand, feels this amount is inadequate and is not self-enforcing, and that a fair pay for firemen and policemen is the average pay (not a maximum of 85%) of the city employees in these eight crafts.

2. What is the proper relationship between the pay of Minneapolis firefighters and patrolmen and that of supervisory personnel in the Fire and Police Departments?

Comparative data from other major cities throughout the country show that supervisory personnel in the Minneapolis Police and Fire Departments are given less recognition in terms of salary differential above that paid patrolmen and firefighters than in most other large cities.

3. What is the value of Minneapolis fire and police fringe benefits?

Considerable disagreement exists with respect to the value, in terms of cost to the taxpayer, of the fire and police fringe benefits. The Minneapolis City Council Coordinator's office estimates the cost of fire and police fringe benefits at in excess of 30% of total salary. The fire and police union leadership categorically rejects this estimate as exorbitant, and has contended their fringe benefits amount to only 8.3% of total pay.

4. Is the present caliber of fire and police personnel adequate?

Although there appears to be general agreement that the performance level at existing pay of both Minneapolis Fire and Police Departments ranks among the best among major cities, fire and police union leaders contend that it is important to raise further the caliber of firemen and policemen.

5. Do present Minneapolis fire and police physical and resident requirements need revision?

Considerable support exists for eliminating a number of requirements for qualification as a Minneapolis policeman or fireman. Some, including the Minneapolis Police Chief Pat Walling and the Citizens League, have urged abolition of the requirement that applicants be residents of the City of Minneapolis. Some have suggested a review of the physical requirements, such as minimum height requirements. Others have urged modification of veterans' preference. These are but a few examples of requirements which should be reviewed.

6. Do present fire and police working conditions and procedures need revision?

Recent weeks have seen considerable discussion of the working conditions of Minneapolis firemen and policemen. Some have suggested that the present 60-hour work week for firemen should be changed. There have been suggestions that policemen should not have to purchase firearms, bullets, etc. The City Council itself has considered using non-uniformed personnel for certain functions, such as issuing tags for parking meter violations. These are just a few of the issues which have been discussed to give an idea of the type of work conditions and procedures which might be reviewed.

CONCLUSION

A number of important policy questions have been raised but not answered during the course of the campaign on Charter Amendment #18. The policemen and firemen naturally are most unhappy over the outcome. The community has turned the proposal down but as of now has provided no procedure under which their complaints and dissatisfactions can be heard and reviewed.

It would be both unfortunate and unnecessary to leave these questions in their present state of doubt. The community has an obligation to insist that the complaints and recommendations made by the fire and police union leadership are heard and given careful consideration at the earliest practical time. It is equally important that other questions raised by the opposition to Amendment #18 be given the same kind of consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We urge the Minneapolis City Council to take prompt steps leading to an impartial and professional review of the issues which have been raised. We believe that such a review can result in findings and recommendations which would receive broad public acceptance as well as the support of members of the Minneapolis Fire and Police Departments. There are a number of ways in which this type of independent and professional review can be made, and we leave to the judgment of the City Council the choice of the most appropriate procedure. However, we respectfully suggest consideration of the appointment by the Council of a broadly representative citizens committee working with professional management consultants as one satisfactory method of accomplishing the desired objective.

2. We urge that the independent and professional review include consideration of, among others, the following policy questions:

- a. Are existing salaries paid Minneapolis firemen and policemen adequate? How should the proper relationship for pay scales for public safety employees with those of other city employees be determined.
- b. Is the existing pay scale of supervisory personnel in the Minneapolis Fire and Police Departments adequate? How should pay of supervisory personnel relate to that of patrolmen and firemen?
- c. What is the value of the fire and police fringe benefits in terms of cost to the taxpayer? How should the cost of these fringe benefits be related to arriving at an equitable salary for firemen and policemen?
- d. Are the Minneapolis Fire and Police Departments attracting and retaining a sufficient number of high caliber personnel to assure continuance of an adequate level of fire and police protection for our community?
- e. Do existing physical requirements preclude many otherwise qualified applicants from becoming Minneapolis policemen or firefighters?
- f. Should the requirement of Minneapolis residency for applicants to the Police and Fire Departments be abolished?

- g. Should veterans' preference laws be modified, and if so in what way?
- h. Should present working conditions, namely a 60-hour work week for firemen and a 40-hour week for policemen, be changed?
- i. Should Minneapolis policemen continue to be required to provide and pay for certain equipment themselves?
- j. Can the efficiency of the Police and Fire Departments be improved through administrative or procedural changes in the method of performing their assignments?

3. We direct the League President to transmit a copy of this report to the officers of the Minneapolis Fire and Police Joint Council, with the invitation that, should they concur with the viewpoints expressed, they join us in urging the City Council to take the recommended action.