

**Mount Vernon Fire Fighters Local 1983, International Association of Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO
And
City of Mount Vernon
Fact Findings
Arbitrator: John Cronin
Date Issued: 09/25/1978**

**Arbitrator: Cronin; John
Case #: 01613-F-78-74
Employer: City of Mount Vernon
Union: IAFF; Local 1983
Date Issued: 09/25/1978**

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
BEFORE THE
PANEL OF FACTFINDERS**

IN RE:)	
THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON,)	
Employer,)	CASE NO. 1613-F-78-74
and)	
MOUNT VERNON FIRE FIGHTERS)	FACT FIGHTERS' REPORT AND
LOCAL 1983, INTERNATIONAL)	RECOMMENDATIONS
ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS,)	
AFL-CIO,)	
Union.)	

I. BACKGROUND

The Fact-finding Panel is composed of John Cronin (Impartial Fact-finder and Chairman), Kenneth J. Evans (Employer's member) and Doug McNall (Union's member).

The existing collective bargaining agreement between the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1983 and the City of Mount Vernon, Washington, is in effect from January 1 1978 through December 31 1979. The agreement provides for a renegotiation of the salary schedule for calendar 1979.

The parties commenced negotiations over wage adjustments on May 25 1978 and entered mediation sessions July 20 1973 but failed to reach agreement.

A hearing in this matter was held on September 6 1978 at Mount Vernon Washington. The City was represented by Negotiator Ken Rudert. Fire Fighters Local 1983 was represented by Ron Frydenlund, President. Both sides were afforded the opportunity to present evidence and argument in support of their positions.

Post hearing memoranda were received and noted by the Panel.

The Fact-finding Panel met on September 19 1978, at Mount Vernon, to consider the presentations. The Panel unanimously makes the following findings and report.

II. ISSUE

The sole issue in this proceeding is what, if any, adjustment should be made in existing salary schedule. (Appendix A of the parties' current contract).

III. POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES

3.1 UNION POSITION The Union seeks a wage increase of 13%. The Fire Fighters contend that according to a comparison with other West coast cities (considered by the union to be of similar size) Mount Vernon Fire Fighter wages are 10.89% below average. The Union argues further that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of February 1977 to February 1978 shows an 8.57% increase and the May to May figure shows a general increase of 9.4% and a 9.3% urban wage earning increase for the Seattle-Everett area. The union contends that these factors together with the increased assessed valuation of property in area, justify the 13% command.

3.2 EMPLOYER POSITION The employer proposes an 8% increase in wages. The city, using a somewhat different set of comparable cities, than that used by the union, argues that... whereas fire-fighter wages lag behind the average, Mount Vernon is about \$22 per month-per man ahead of the average in total remuneration. In regard to the CPI, the employer sites the latest urban wage earner figure... July-July... 8.4%. The City argues further that loss of sales tax revenues dictate fiscal caution.

IV. FINDINGS FACT

4.1 COMPARABLE CITIES. The parties presented no stipulation as to cities of comparable size to Mount Vernon, on the Pacific Coast. Some cities used by the parties in their presentations overlapped. A calculation from most of the cities presented by both parties, (leaving out Clarkston and Moses Lake which seemed remote) shows Mount Vernon to be over 6% below average in basic wages but nearly average in total remuneration.

4.2 C. P. I. and PAST PRACTICE. Altho the union based its initial demand on the February-February CPI increase of 8.57%, we note that the parties have tended to use of May- May figures in their past negotiations in the May - May 1978 CPI figures 9.4/9.3%. We must take cognizance however of the latest changes in these statistics, and the July 77 - July 78 figure is 8.4%. The City argues that the medical and vision benefits negotiated in 1977 are projected through 1978. We note this but we also consider that

the parties settled the 1977 wage increased with this in mind since it was below the current CPI.

V. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing the employer proposal of an 8% increase appears too low. On the other hand effects do not warrant "catching up" to the unions demand of 13%.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The Panel unanimously recommends a wage increase of 9.3%. The Panel recommends further that for future negotiations that parties establish a mutual agreeable list of comparable cities and decide on a definite month for CPI guidance.

Dated September 25 1978

/s/

John Cronin Chairman

/s/

Doug McNall

/s/

Kenneth J. Evans