

City of Bremerton

And

**Bremerton Fire Fighters Local No. 437, International Association of Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO
Fact Findings**

Arbitrator: Jim Irwin

Date Issued: 09/27/1976

Arbitrator: Irwin; Jim

Case #: 00387-F-76-00029

Employer: City of Bremerton

Union: IAFF; Local 437

Date Issued: 09/27/1976

IN THE MATTER OF FACT FINDING

**BREMERTON FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL NO. 437,)
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE)
FIGHTERS, AFL-CIO) Report and Recommendations
AND) Pursuant to RCW 41.56
CITY OF BREMERTON, WASHINGTON) Case No. 1-76-29**

Fact Finder

Jim Irwin, Public Employment Relations Commission

Appearances

For the Fire Fighters Local No. 437:

F. Donald Deitch, President

For the City of Bremerton:

Honorable Glen Jaarstad, Mayor

Gary Hulbert, Donworth & Associates

BACKGROUND

Negotiating sessions were held between the parties from May 7 to June 22, 1976. The parties agreed to extend the forty-five (45) day time limit for negotiations to July 31, 1976 to review the 1977 projected City budget. The budget meeting was held July 28, 1976. The parties agreed to waive mediation and proceed to Fact-Finding in the event an agreement could not be concluded by July 31, 1977. The parties also agreed on June 8, 1976 the following cities would be used for comparison in the event of Fact-Finding or Arbitration:

Bellevue	Longview
Everett	Richland
Yakima	Renton

Vancouver Edmonds
Bellingham Olympia

ISSUES

The issues subject to Fact Finding and the position of the parties are as follows:

WAGES	
Union	City
15% Increase	5% Increase
Dependent Medical	
Fully paid	None
Dependent Dental	
Fully paid	None
Overtime	
Time and one-half after 40 hours	Time and one-half after 56-hour shift

All other contract terms have been agreed to by both parties. The City of Bremerton presently provides complete City-paid group medical and dental insurance programs for Fire Fighter employees.

FACT FINDING PROCEEDINGS

The City and the Union met with the Fact Finder on September 13, 1976. In response to a request, the City submitted a brief which included tables showing a comparison of wages and benefits with the above-mentioned ten cities, several of which are included in this report. The Union presented a document which included their contract proposals, minutes of negotiating sessions, and tables of comparison of medical and dental benefits.

DISCUSSION

The wage rates of the Fire Department employees of Bremerton and of the employees of the ten agreed-upon cities are shown in the table in attached Exhibit No. 1. A close examination of the table indicates to the Fact Finder that the Bremerton rates are little, if any, out of line with the average of the other cities.

The City of Bremerton provides no medical coverage for dependents of employees of the Fire Department. The table attached as Exhibit No. 2 shows that all but two of the ten comparative cities do provide such coverage. Six of the ten provide full coverage, one provides 75% coverage, one 50%, and in the other two cities the employees are required to pay their own premiums. Exhibit No. 2 shows that the Bremerton Fire Fighters are substantially below the average in dependent medical coverage. The dependents of Bremerton Fire Fighters are not presently covered

by dental insurance. Five of the ten comparison cities either have no dental plan or employees pay for that coverage. Three of the cities pay 100%, one pays 76%, and the other pays 66 2/3% of dependent dental costs. (Exhibit No. 2). It appears to the Fact Finder that the Bremerton Fire Department employees are not in a disadvantageous position in relation to the average of the ten cities in dependent dental coverage.

Fire Department employees of Bremerton are on a fifty-six (56) hour week and receive time-and-a-half after that period. The overtime practices of the ten comparable cities are as follows:

<u>City</u>	<u>Work Schedule</u>	<u>Overtime</u>
Bellingham	52.00/hrs. per week	1½ times after 52.00
Olympia	56.00	1½ times after 56.00
Richland	56.00	1½ times after 56.00
Vancouver	49.77	1½ times after 49.77
Longview	51.33	1½ times after 51.33
Everett	42.00	1½ times after 42.00
Renton	49.38	1½ times after 49.38
Edmonds	48.00	1½ times after 48.00
Bellevue	54.33	1½ times after 54.33
Yakima	55.00	1½ times after 55.00

It is apparent that the average work week of the ten cities (51.38 hrs.) is less than that of the Bremerton Fire Department. The City states that a reduction in the work week to 40 hours would incur additional costs in overtime pay in the amount of \$99,586.08, or 14.31% of the 1976 Fire Fighter payroll.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with RCW 41. 56.440, the Fact Finder, in making his recommendations, is mindful of the guidelines set forth for same contained in RCW 41.56.460. Special consideration is given the rise in the Seattle Consumer Price Index (5.3% Aug., 1975 to Aug. 1976), the total cost to the City, and the comparison of per capita fire department personnel costs (see Exhibit No. 3). Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made regarding the issues in dispute:

Wages: 5.3% across-the-board increase, January 1, 1977 - December 31, 1977

Dependent Medical: Full coverage for dependents of Fire Fighters beginning January 1, 1977 (appr. cost, 2.46%)

Dependent Dental: None

Overtime: Time-and-a-half to be paid after 56 hrs. week (to

remain same)

Respectfully submitted

Date September 27, 1976

Jim Irwin
Public Employment Relations
Commission

Exhibit No. 1

COMPARATIVE SALARIES

City	1976				
	Population	Fire Fighter	Lieutenant	Captain	Battalion Chief
Bellevue w/degree)	67,000	\$998-1,312	\$1,414-1,496	\$1,650	\$1,865(1,951
Everett	52,500	830-1,185	----	1,340	1,516
Yakima	49,100	881-1,170	1,233-1,294	1,359-1,422	1,491-1,562**
Vancouver	46500	1,018-1,238	1,122-1,364	1,238-1,509	1,364-1,659
Bellingham	42,100	948-1,098	----	1,131-1,311	1,199-1,457
Richland	30,009	1,058-1,199	1,238-1,295	1,308-1,365	1,360-1,479
Longview	29,550	1,011-1,201	1,115-1,343	1,225-1,461**	----
Renton	26,500	1,147-1,338	1,539	1,739	1,829**
Olympia	25,480	982-1,220	1,203-1,341	1,323-1,459	
Edmonds	25,039	878-1,346*	1,246-1,522*	----	----
AVERAGE (excluding Bremerton)		\$975-1,231	\$1,264-1,3.99	\$1,368-1,473	\$1,518-1,624

BREMERTON 29,095. 1,038-1,187 1,321 1,469***

* These figures reflect the city's last offer of a 10% increase for 1976 - negotiations are still under way.

** These classifications are excluded from the bargaining unit.

*** The City of Bremerton Fire Department does not utilize the position title of Captain. However, the level and scope of responsibility of a Bremerton Battalion Chief are comparable to the position of Captain in other fire departments.

Exhibit No. 2

COMPARISON OF FIRE FIGHTERS DEPENDENT MEDICAL AND DENTAL GROUP INSURANCE COVERAGE**

City	Dependent Medical Costs Paid By City		Dependent Dental Costs Paid by City	
	\$/Month	% of Total Prem.	\$/Month	% of Total Prem.
Bellingham	\$46.27	100%	\$19.00	100%
Renton	64.38	100%	16.65	100%
Richland	47.45	100%	10.00	76%

Bellevue	47.97	75%	8.00	66-2/3%
Olympia	32.31	50%	No Plan	
Vancouver	44.97	100%	No Plan	
Longview		Employee Paid		Employee Paid
Everett		Employee Paid	No Plan	
Yakima	40.49	100%	No Plan	
Edmonds	38.82	100%	22.20	100%

**Source: Washington Local Government Personnel Institute, June 1976.

Exhibit No. 3

**COMPARISON OF TOTAL AND PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES
FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL COSTS**

<u>City</u>	<u>1976 Population*</u>	<u>1976 Fire Department Personnel Costs</u>	<u>Per Capita Fire Department Personnel Costs</u>
Everett	52,500	\$2,198,049	\$41.87
Renton	26,500	1,095,126	41.33
Olympia	25,480	921,007	36.15
Bellingham	42,100	1,470,580	34.93
BREMERTON	29,095**	890,838	30.62
Yakima	49,100	1,484,399	30.23
Vancouver	46,500	1,404,392	30.20
Richland	30,009	793,127	26.43
Longview	29,550	701,706	23.75
Bellevue	67,000	1,380,540	20.61
Edmonds	25,039	331,952	13.26
AVERAGE (excluding Bremerton)	\$39,378	\$1,178,088	\$29.88

* Source: Official Population of Cities, Towns and Countries, April 1, 1976, published June 30, 1976, State of Washington, Office of Program Planning and Fiscal Management.

** Net of Government employees' living on board ships or living on U. S. Government reservations for which the U. S. Navy provides fire protection.