

September 1, 1966

DRAFT

Dear Captain Martin:

For the last five months we have been in almost constant communications in an effort to reach a satisfactory and equitable solution to the problems of pay and work hours of the members of the Atlanta Fire Department.

The Board of Aldermen and its responsible committees, the Personnel Board, the Office of the Mayor, and an outside mediator have given full consideration and courtesy to you and your colleagues in the Fire Department in response to your requests for improvements in your working hours and pay scales.

We have also given consideration to the plight of all city employees and took positive steps earlier in the year to produce adequate pay and reasonable hours for every employee through a comprehensive study of pay classification by the Public Administration Service.

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Further, we have of necessity and public responsibility, given consideration to the citizens of Atlanta, for whom we have a legal and moral responsibility to operate the City government within the framework of the legal and political charter and ordinances of the City.

During this period of time, the citizens of Atlanta and the City government have been subjected to a serious and illegal walkout, constant public threats and intimidation of strikes and other unwarranted and undeserved charges by you and the Firemen you represent. In contrast, the City has observed at all times a dignified, sympathetic, honest and fair attitude toward the Firemen and their demands.

In the illegal strike in June, the Fulton Superior Court ordered the Firemen to return to work. The order of the Court was ignored and it was necessary for the City government to ask for contempt proceedings against the striking Firemen. At the request of the Firemen, the City agreed to withdraw the Court action without prejudice and with no recriminations. This agreement has been kept.

At the further request of the Firemen, the City agreed to the joint appointment of an impartial outside mediator to weigh all the facts and make a recommendation on the basis of evidence. Dr. Edwin Harrison,

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the choice of the Firemen, was chosen and subsequently rendered an impartial report which you fully rejected.

Following your rejection of the impartial report and recommendation, the full scope and authority of the City government was put at your disposal. You have met with the Board of Firemasters, the Personnel Board, the Finance Committee and the Public Administration Service personnel consultants. They were all made available to you without prejudice and with full courtesy.

I am firmly convinced and assure you that we have explored every avenue within the legal bounds of public authority to find the ways and means to assure the Firemen of the good faith of their elected government.

In view of all the preceding action it is my intention to proceed along the following lines if the Firemen remain at work in good faith until the City can take appropriation action following completion of the PAS report about September 15 and subsequent results in the new budget which will go into effect on January 1, 1967:

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1. I will recommend to the Finance Committee that emergency funds from the salary account balance be used to initiate hiring and training of additional Fire Department personnel on October 1, so that trained personnel will be available to implement the 56-hour work week on January 1, 1967.

2. I will further recommend that the balance of the excess salary account be utilized to implement a pay scale of one and one-half time for hours worked in excess of 56 hours per week beginning October 1 and extending through the end of the year.

I sincerely hope and trust that the Firemen will not take any overt action in conflict with their oath of office or with their moral responsibility to their city and against the legal order of the Court which has instructed them that they do not have the right to walk off their jobs or to strike.

The Firemen do not have the right to strike against the public interest of this city.

In the event of any strike proceeding, the City has no choice but to attempt to secure a restraining order and an order to return to

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work if a strike exists. Failure to obey the no-strike order would result in contempt proceedings. In the event this should happen the City shall immediately declare all vacated jobs open and attempt to fill them with qualified personnel who will accept their responsibilities and uphold their oaths to provide full fire protection to the citizens of Atlanta.

I urge you to persuade the Firemen to remain on the job, help rebuild the morale of the Department and help those of us who are seeking an honest solution to their problem, find the means with which to resolve it.

To those men who are not willing to follow a reasonable course, I would point out that it is their responsibility to advise the City of their intentions to resign and to submit their resignations at the proper time, giving the City a reasonable notice in order that a qualified replacement can be secured.

I hope you and all the Firemen of Atlanta will accept your responsibilities and fulfill your duties in good faith as we seek a final solution.

Sincerely,