

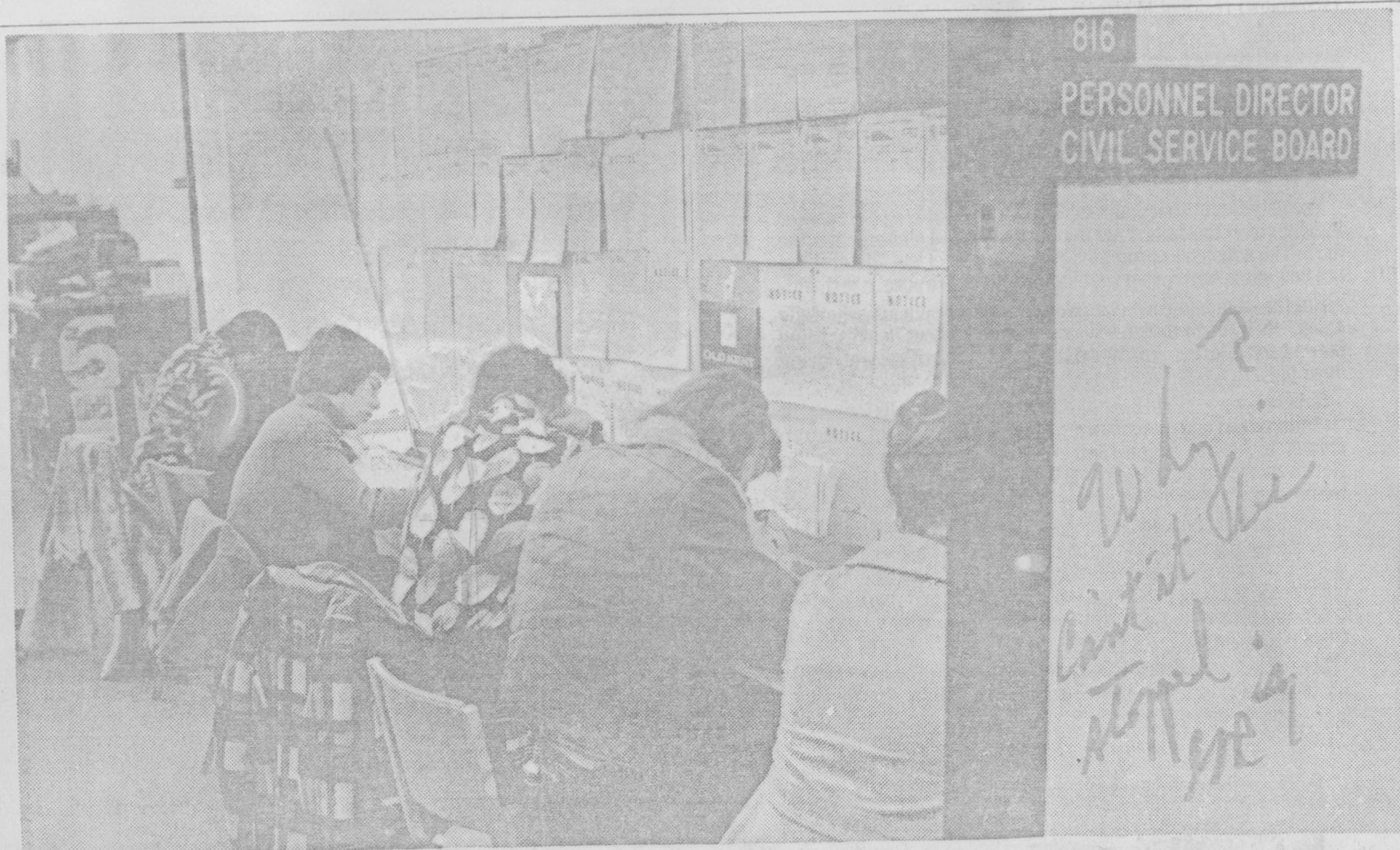
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GR Press Photo by HENRY F. ZEMAN

All the Chairs Are Taken by Job Seekers These Days in City Personnel Office

F.F.A Hiring Rules Hike Social Agency Staff Pay



*Why
can't it be
stopped in
the first place?*

GR Press Photo by HENRY F. ZEMAN

All the Chairs Are Taken by Job Seekers These Days in City Personnel Office

EEA Hiring Rules Hike Social Agency Staff Pay

By Brian Malone

Employees of local social action agencies will be drawing bigger paychecks now that they will be paid under Emergency Employment Act funding and at least two city commissioners aren't happy about it.

The matter surfaced in an executive session at City Hall. Commissioners Harold Dekker, 3rd Ward, and C. Blair Mohny, 2nd Ward, who want the salaries trimmed back, acknowledged that the meeting probably did not warrant secrecy as the discussion strayed from "personalities" to the general topic of pay for social agency employees.

Discussion of personalities, land acquisition and labor negotiations

warrant executive sessions, according to City Commission policy.

The personalities were Latin-American Council Director Martin Morales and Baxter Community Center head Herschell Turner and their new salaries. The two will be making about \$19,000 each, at least \$3,000 to \$4,000 more than they earned before.

"There'll be a lot of disgruntled people when they see we're paying wages of this nature," Mohny remarked. "We really need to use this money (EEA) to put people to work — but not with big salaries, with adequate pay."

Dekker felt that the pay the workers receive will not be commensurate with

what persons in similar privately-funded organizations make. He also questioned whether the city is using the federal job hiring funds to best advantage.

Employees of Baxter, Latin-American Council and at least nine other agencies are being laid off, then rehired by the city through EEA, and later Concentrated Employment Training Act (CETA) funds when EEA runs out next March.

The plan is part of a two-pronged attack to keep the human needs programs alive now that most of their federal funding has dried up.

The City Commission was able to scrape up about \$258,000 from the General Fund to help the agencies handle cash problems. EEA and CETA money is to relieve the agencies of payroll responsibility. The workers officially are city employees but work for and at the various agencies.

Human Resources Director Jerry Bosworth reportedly informed city fathers that both Turner and Morales would be making considerably more than they did as privately-employed directors. Employed in the Civil Service classification "Manpower Operation Coordinator," the two will earn anywhere from \$18,465 to \$22,516. Turner would not disclose how much he made before, but Morales said his annual pay was \$15,250.

But Mohny and Dekker are concerned with more than just the salaries of the directors. Clerical help in the agencies, who normally earned about \$6,500 a year, will collect nearly \$1,500 more a year.

They asked Bosworth to scale down the wages if it can be done legally. "I'd like to see cuts in the neighborhood of 20 per cent," Mohny stated. "My biggest concern is that we put people to work. There's no need to hire just two people when there's money for three available."

Bosworth is expected to report back to commissioners next Tuesday. It isn't known whether the meeting will be public or private.

Turner and Morales, told of commission deliberations, were critical of city fathers' attitude.

Morales pointed out that as "seasonal" (less than permanent) city employees, they will not enjoy the same fringe benefits as regular employees, such as paid vacations and insurance. "I had those benefits under the old system," he said.

They also emphasized that the nature of their work means 12- to 14-hour days, sometimes seven days a week. As seasonals, they wouldn't receive time-and-a-half or double-time pay. Lower echelon seasonal employees, however, are eligible for overtime.

"When we were making \$2.40 an hour, nobody came by and told us it was too low," Turner chided.

The criticism of the new pay scale for the social agency workers, especially clerical help, is an indirect swipe at last summer's settlement with the nonuniformed employees union.

The nature of that settlement of 50 cents an hour for the first year "across the board" means that city employees at lower salaries will show the greatest annual pay increases.

Dekker, Mohny and officials of the personnel office admit that the pay scale on those job levels probably is higher than similar positions in the private sector.

The attractive pay seems to be attracting job seekers. Andrew Vanderveen, personnel director, said as many as 360 persons have come to his office in one day to fill out applications. About \$100,000 of EEA money remains available. Gunderson said the city expects to receive about \$3 million in CETA funds over the next three years.

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