

Carlyle proposal assures 1 of 6 firefighters' jobs

Paulette Tobin August 24, 1989
Staff Writer

Mayor Keith Carlyle on Wednesday outlined a plan that assured only one of six airport firefighters a city job, but he said other displaced firefighters would be given first priority for other openings in the fire department.

Carlyle defended his support for hiring a private security company at Rapid City Regional Airport. Having a private security company would not compromise safety at the airport and could save from \$55,000

to more than \$70,000 a year, he said.

"It is sometimes painfully obvious that if we are going to continue serving the people of Rapid City in a manner that is affordable, changes have to be made," the mayor said at a news conference. "... Change in government, as I have found out, is never easy, always criticized and only proven effective or not (effective) after the critical test of time."

Teamsters union Business Agent Mark Weber, who represents the firefighters, disputed the projected

fighters earn between \$21,102.34 and \$23,403.87 annually. Two lieutenants there are paid \$24,659.25 a year, and the captain earns \$28,096.60, Fire Chief Jim Tish said. City officials said they didn't know the amount JJ Security would pay its employees.

Carlyle said despite pay differences, firefighters could have many motives for going to work for JJ Security.

"There are firefighters within the fire department right now that are here because they absolutely love their position and what they're do-

ing, and money is not the object to them," Carlyle said. "There are other firefighters that definitely need increased money to live on."

Weber said it was true that firefighters loved their jobs, as evidenced by the low turnover rate in the Rapid City Fire Department and in other fire departments around the country.

"They love their job, plus they want to make a good living because they have families to support,"

Continued AUGUST 24, 1989

Weber said. "They've still got to pay their bills."

Weber said he questioned whether firefighters would want to work for JJ Security "because of the pay rate differences and because it's working for somebody who has replaced their other jobs." JJ Security's contract reflected wages of \$6.84 an hour to \$8.12 an hour, Weber said. But he said those figures included employee benefits, so that the actual hourly wage would be about \$4 to \$5 an hour.

Tish and Personnel Director Bob Mullally will spend the next two to three weeks determining which firefighters will be affected by the airport layoff. They also will look at options available for keeping more of the displaced firefighters. One of those options is contract buyout for those firefighters eligible for retirement, Carlyle said.

"I think it's important, too, to point out that there's a good chance that there may not be anybody laid off," Mullally said. "We're going to work very hard to see that that doesn't happen."

When asked how that could be accomplished, Mullally said, "It would have to be through the process of attrition when there's openings made available."

Carlyle said displaced firefighters would be given first consideration for any vacancy in the fire department, but Weber said that already was guaranteed under the firefighters' contract.

Carlyle also said, "Arrangements will be negotiated with the unions" giving firefighters "first priority consideration" for any city job opening they are qualified to perform. Firefighters would have at least two years and possibly more to be called back to fire department jobs, he said.

Weber said he didn't know how that proposal would be accepted by other city employees.

"They may not (like it), because today the first consideration (for job openings) is given to those who work in that department, so there's a lot of things that have to be worked out," he said.

Carlyle also said the city personnel office would help firefighters find jobs in other departments.

Weber said the union's calculations were that hiring JJ Security would save only \$11,000 to \$18,000. He said the city did not consider the cost of training and maintenance and other costs that still would be borne by the airport after the private company was hired.



Carlyle

Weber

cost savings. He said one of the points in Carlyle's plan to aid displaced firefighters was guaranteed

in their union contract. Another point in the mayor's plan could cause conflicts with other city employees, Weber said.

Carlyle said his plan guaranteed one displaced firefighter a job with the city fire department, which currently has one opening. Also, JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., the company that will begin providing crash, fire and rescue protection at the airport beginning about Nov. 1, has offered to hire two of the displaced city firefighters.

Currently, three airport fire-

City may swap water line for firefighters

9/13/89

Paulette Tobin
Staff Writer

Six city firefighters may keep their jobs at Rapid City Regional Airport if city officials agree to pay \$380,000 for an already completed water line to the airport.

Aldermen on Wednesday gave tentative approval to the plan, and airport board Chairman Tom Zeller said the proposal was something the airport board "could work with."

Mayor Keith Carlyle suggested the council offer to pay for the water line to encourage the airport board to keep the firefighters. The airport board wanted to save money by hiring JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to replace city firefighters working at the airport.

Carlyle supported the airport

board's decision to lay off the men, but said the proposal to pay for the water line "was the only thing that was salable to the council and to the airport board."

"I still think there were substantial savings that could have been realized by JJ Security going to the airport and taking those airport firefighters and integrating them into the program downtown with the buy out," he said.

The mayor wanted to use job buy outs to encourage older city firefighters to retire, thus making room for the laid-off airport workers in the city fire department.

Carlyle said five senior firefighters had inquired about early retirement even before the hiring of

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JJ Security became an issue.

The mayor told the Rapid City Common Council's Legal and Finance Committee Wednesday that the council should not pay airport firefighters' salaries. Such a subsidy could put the airport board's negotiations with tenants and airlines in jeopardy, he said. Lease payments are a large part of the airport's income.

"The tenants or the airlines could come to the airport board and just tell them point blank, 'Go to the city if you want increases in your landing fees or your rents, because if the city is going to pork barrel you, why don't they do that here?'" Carlyle said.

Carlyle and Zeller said Wednesday that the city paying for the water line was not a subsidy to the airport. Zeller said the water line was not an expense paid by the airlines through their lease.

Of the proposal to pay \$380,000 plus interest over 10 years for the water line, Zeller said, "I think that

this framework is something that we could work with. It's looking like an acceptable compromise."

He said the airport board "really had no way" to cover paying for the water line, which was completed last year.

Airport board members and city aldermen long had argued about who would pay for the water line. The airport board said city officials had agreed the city should pay for it. But city officials said they had agreed the city would pay the upfront cost and airport officials had agreed to reimburse the city.

Earlier this year, airport board members grudgingly agreed to pay for the water line.

The Legal and Finance Committee voted unanimously Wednesday to pay for the water line if firefighters kept their jobs. Aldermen Alvin Albrecht, Vivian Pappel, Dick Robinson and Harold Weiland were absent. Alderman Gale Holbrook, the committee chairman, did not vote, but praised Alderman Delores Coffing for keeping the issues before

the mayor and council.

Aldermen who supported the proposal said keeping the city firefighters at the airport was best for airport safety.

Carlyle said he believed in studying the issues, although some council members did not.

"Many decisions are based on political outcome," he said. "In other words, if the politics are right, then we'll vote for it. ... I believe in doing what's right for the majority of people in Rapid City."

"I would remind the mayor that I think the council has been very willing to study the issues," Alderman Carole Hillard said.

The Rapid City Common Council will vote on whether to approve the deal at its meeting Monday night, after which it would also have to be approved by the airport board.

The firefighters, represented by the Teamsters union, also would have to agree that for three years they would receive no more than a two-thirds cost of living adjustment

with an annual maximum of five percent. Last year, firefighters received a 2 percent raise. The six firefighters already have agreed to give up a total \$8,787 per year in security pay.

The president of JJ Security said in a telephone interview Wednesday he was not aware of the tentative agreement between the city and the airport board to retain the firefighters.

Norman Watermolen said he couldn't comment on whether his company would be damaged if the proposal was approved.

"I do not have a contract (with the airport board) because they haven't sent me one to be signed," Watermolen said.

Last week, Zeller signed a three-year contract with JJ Security, but the contract never was delivered to JJ Security officials, Assistant City Attorney Bob Jackson said. Instead, a copy of the contract was sent to them, Jackson said.

City man accused in spree of fires

Hugh O'Gara 9/13/89
Staff Writer

A 27-year-old Rapid City man is scheduled to appear today in Magistrate Court on charges related to a burning spree in downtown Rapid City.

Terry R. Taves was arrested on multiple arson charges at 6 a.m. Sunday, less than three hours after he allegedly set his latest blaze, police said.

Taves is accused of setting nine fires over a five-day period this past week in the central city.

The investigation is continuing, Lt. Doug Noyes of the Criminal Investigations Department said, and more information will be available today.

The latest series of fires began when firemen were called to extinguish fire at a small house at 417 1/2 Kansas City St. at 9:49 p.m. Saturday.

It was the second time this week the house in an alley between Kansas City and Quincy Streets had been burned. A fire had been set there early Friday, causing \$15,000 damage to a garage, house and power pole.

There was a four-hour lull before a rapid-fire series of fires were reported.

The next fire was at 2:19 a.m. Sunday, about a block away from the Saturday house fire at 516 Quincy St. Twenty-five minutes later, another fire was reported about three blocks away behind Sir Randy's Carpets at 510 Main Street. Less than 20 minutes later, at 3:04 a.m. Sunday, another fire was spotted near Hubbard Milling Co., 426 Omaha St., about two blocks from the prior Main Street fire.

Besides the fires Saturday and Sunday, Taves also is accused of setting fires at:

- The alley behind 21 Kansas City St. Wednesday evening where a series of blazes caused an estimated \$10,000 damage to a shed, power

pole and two vehicles.

• The back of The Rapid City Journal Thursday evening.

• The first fire at 417 1/2 Kansas City St. Friday evening that began in a garage and spread to the house and a power pole.

• A garage at 18 E. Kansas City St. at 4:38 a.m. Friday that caused about \$500 damage.

• An alley garbage dumpster about 5 a.m. Friday at 715 East Blvd. where trash and a mattress were burned.

The fires set Wednesday evening through early Friday caused more than \$25,000 damage, according to investigators. The total damage figure for the fires still is being tallied.

By Friday, investigators said they believed the fires to be the work of one person.

Fire Marshal Ken Froelich said Friday he thought there was one arsonist, "because of the time frame and the similarity of how they were started."

All of the fires were started in the late evening or early morning in downtown Rapid City.

Mellette girl in burn unit, still serious

An 8-month-old Mellette girl remained in serious condition at McKennan Hospital Pediatric Special Care Unit in Sioux Falls Wednesday after being severely burned in Rapid City Tuesday evening.

Leslie Little was flown to Sioux Falls late Tuesday night after she was accidentally scalded by hot coffee at the Happy Chef Restaurant on La Crosse Street in Rapid City. The child reportedly grabbed her mother's arm as she reached for a coffee pot. The coffee then spilled on the child, causing burns on the child's chest, hands, arms and neck, a restaurant employee said.

The child was taken to Rapid City Regional Hospital shortly after the accident, where she was listed in serious condition. After receiving emergency treatment, the child was flown to Sioux Falls late Tuesday night.



A Rapid City fireman pours water on a fire at a small house at 417 1/2 Kansas City St. The house had been the target of an arsonist Friday morning. (Photo by Don Polovich)

City home hit with 2nd blaze in 2 days

Firefighters extinguished a blaze about 11 p.m. Saturday at a downtown Rapid City home, the second fire in as many days at the property.

The houses at 417 1/2 Kansas City St. had been the target of an arsonist Friday morning, according to fire investigators.

Just as the earlier fire at the house in the alley between Kansas City and Quincy streets, Saturday's blaze apparently started in a garage and spread to the empty house. The fire was reported around 10 p.m.

and declared out at 10:55 p.m.

Police and sheriff's deputies blocked streets in the area and smoke was billowing through downtown Saturday evening.

Fire department investigators already suspected arson in the first fire as well as three others fires in a five-block area. The fires included a \$500 garage blaze at 18 E. Kansas City St., \$10,000 damage at 21 Kansas City St. to a shed, power pole and two vehicles, and a dumpster fire at 715 E. Boulevard.

Slicing government always cuts people

9-21-89

It is unfortunate that Rapid City professional firefighters based at Rapid City Regional Airport are losing their jobs to a private firm from Wisconsin.

However, in making the tough decision Mayor Keith Carlyle is living up to promises to streamline government made when running for office.

There are some red herring issues involved in the firefighter controversy.

There is the issue of the salary of Public Works Director Mike Strub, who was hired in 1987 for \$39,512 and now receives \$45,673, although Carlyle wanted to increase his salary to \$47,016. Carlyle's justification is that Strub is an outstanding employee and manager. Undoubtedly, the firefighters who will find themselves without a city position are also good employees, else they would not be employed. But Strub and the airport issue are separate matters, despite efforts made to link them.

There is the issue of money that formerly would stay in the community going to a company based in another state. This too is troublesome. But much of the money paid to the private firm will remain in the area as wages. And without private firms headquartered elsewhere coming into Rapid City, there virtually would be no Rapid City.

For these two issues to become central you must accept the proposition that the purpose of government is to serve as an employment agency for people, that it is government's role to provide higher wages and better benefits than private employers. Those are not convincing reasons to support public over private sector employment.

There are two core issues involved here — safety and government management.

Consider safety. Even with the city trained and supported firefighters, safety margins are minimal at the airport. What the Federal Aviation Administration essentially requires at the airport is a fire engine and one person to move that engine onto the runway. In practice, it was decided to have two people on duty. That will not change when the private firm takes over. However, two people on a fire truck are not going to be much help in the event of a fiery jetliner crash. As we saw last month in Sioux City, Iowa, when a major crash occurs massive forces must be brought in to render assistance. The same professional backup forces that would respond to a major crash will still respond to a major crash.

Firefighters also provide security and medical aid at the airport. It is probably true that the people now in place do a better job than will new, minimally paid firefighters. But that is not certain. The private firm, JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., runs similar operations at other airports and most reports indicate it does an adequate job. The contract is on a three-year basis. If it turns out that money is not saved, or that employees don't measure up, the contract need not be renewed.

Then there is the issue of managing government. If public jobs are unnecessary, they should be eliminated. Instead, government employment on all levels tends to bloat. In the private sector, if cutbacks must be made, they are made. If the airport board believes that standards can be met and money saved by the expedient of using a private fire and security firm, it makes sense to switch. It is easy to say this when we are talking about distant federal jobs. It is hard when it hits home. But the issue in Washington and in Rapid City is the same.

Carlyle's offer of first priority for appropriate city job openings to those who are laid off, and attempts to help place them with JJ Security if they choose, show concern for the affected individuals. In truth, no one wants those good people out of work.

In the effort to shrink government, people are the hardest place to cut. Yet those cuts must be made if savings are to be made and government spending reduced. Those are precisely the hard decisions made by thousands of managers every day in private business.

Airport firefighters

I thought a mayor was elected to promote growth for a city. I fail to see how hiring JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., helps our economy.

Are the profits going to stay here? Are they going to pay their people enough to purchase a home, or a new car?

The firefighters are now being replaced by a company that is not only from out of town, but out of state.

I notice that some city council members try to do what is decent and human and not always let the almighty dollar overcome reason. They have no control over an airport board that threw money away like there was no end to it and a mayor who agreed with the board, when it comes to giving money to a certain few.

Consultant Floyd Matthew's \$100,000 plus could have paid for several firefighters and City Public Works Director Mike Strub.
Aw forget it!
WYNNONA FOWLER
3423 Maple Ave.
Rapid City
9/7/89

Airport firefighters 9/14/89

Rapid City Mayor Keith Carlyle said he questioned why the council had waited until "the 11th hour" to raise their concerns about private firefighters.

Where has the mayor been, in a bubble? On Aug. 23 he voted against a motion to help save airport firefighter's jobs. On Aug. 14 he vetoed action by the council to save those jobs.

This is action he has taken in just the last month. If the mayor can remember, this all started with the council meeting on May 15. It is not an 11th-hour decision to save these jobs, as he stated on Sep. 5.

The majority of the council respects the wishes of the taxpayers and is trying to save the jobs at the airport. They will be remembered at election time.

Three or four members of the council and the mayor are against the fire department and will also be remembered a different way at election time.

As for the Airport Board, I hope they wake up and smell the roses with their private firefighters.
PAUL HUNT
P.O. Box 3069
Rapid City

See Alderman on page A2

Aldermen doubt firemen savings

Paulette Tobin
Staff Writer

9/6/89

Several Rapid City aldermen told Mayor Keith Carlyle Monday night they didn't believe contentions by him and members of the airport board that hiring private airport firefighters would save money.

"The figures that we've been given have changed several times, and we're questioning whether the savings actually exist," Alderman Carole Hillard said.

Airport officials said hiring private firefighters to replace city

firefighters would save the financially strapped airport from \$42,000 to \$55,000 a year. The mayor said on Aug. 23 that the airport could save from \$55,000 to more than \$70,000 a year.

Alderman Don Kellar said there was a \$26,000 difference in 1989 crash, fire and rescue costs at the airport and what had been proposed in the 1990 airport budget.

"I don't know how we're actually going to find out" the savings. "We've been told so many things, and you can't hardly believe any-

and sign the contract because the city legal department had finished with it. He said the airport board had not discussed what might happen if the common council required them to keep the firefighters after a contract was signed with a private company.

"We assumed that we would go ahead and do the contract," he said. "In fact, they would have to pay damages to JJ Security if they renege on the contract."

City Attorney Mike Diedrich said the city could be liable for damages if it canceled the contract. He said passing an ordinance requiring the airport to keep city firefighters, or dissolving the airport board, would not get the city or the airport out of the contract.

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signed?" Alderman Delores Coffing said she suggested some time ago that the city subsidize the airport board so the six firefighters stationed there could keep their jobs. Also, she said, "We kept getting different figures" on what the cost savings would be.

But in an interview, Airport Board Chairman Zeller said the contract had changed because the airport board added certain items and deducted others in response to the concerns of council members and others.

"But there is no question that the airport is going to be saving in the order of \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year" by hiring private firefighters, Zeller said.

Zeller said he decided to go ahead

body any more," Kellar said.

After the council was told the airport board had signed the contract to hire a private firefighting force, Alderman Alvin Albrecht asked the mayor if he had ordered the signing of the contract. The mayor said he had not.

"I can't believe it," Albrecht said.

But the mayor said the airport board on May 8 had authorized its chairman, Tom Zeller, to sign a contract with JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to provide crash, fire and rescue protection at the airport.

Coffing said an appointed board such as the airport board should not have the power "to override the power of the people" or their elected representatives, the common council.

"My calls indicate the people who own the airport want the firefighters to stay," she said.

Coffing said the city should "take care of our people through public safety" and "take care of the people who give us that public safety."

"We don't say, 'You did a good job but you're too expensive now, and we're telling you to pack up and move on,'" she said.

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City pool reopening after chemical spill

Paulette Tobin 7/12/89
Staff Writer

Horace Mann swimming pool will reopen today following an accident Tuesday in which about 44 gallons of sodium hydroxide, or lye, were spilled near the pool.

The spill occurred when a 55-gallon drum of the caustic chemical fell from a delivery truck and ruptured, said Craig Schaffer, public information officer for the Rapid City, Fire Department. No injuries were reported.

Firefighters and police officers responded to the 9:47 a.m. call by blocking off the immediate area and setting up wooden barricades around a large grassy area just south of the pool.

Schaffer said the barricades were put up to prevent anyone from coming into direct physical contact with the sodium hydroxide, which could result in a chemical burn to the skin.

"Since it's a pool site and summer, our biggest concern is children coming through it with bare feet," he said. Residents in the area should not fear chemical fumes or any long-term effects from the spill, he said.

Schaffer said the chemical spilled

on a sidewalk outside the pool fence and then was washed into the grass with water from a garden hose. City workers put acid on the area to

'Since it's a pool site and summer, our biggest concern is children coming through it with bare feet.'
— Craig Schaffer

neutralize the chemical, which is used in the pool to balance the chlorine level.

Soil tests also will be done, Schaffer said.

A fire engine from the North Side Fire Station, the fire department shift commander and the department's Hazardous Materials Response Team immediately reported to the spill site, in addition to police officers who blocked off the area for a couple of hours.

Lori Coble, head of the city recreation department, said a city pool worker and an employee of Black Hills Chemical were the only people at the pool at the time of the spill. The pool had not opened yet for the day.

Fireworks blamed for some area fires

7/5/89

Fires, some caused by fireworks, flared up throughout the region Tuesday night.

A half-acre fire four miles north of Rapid City was controlled at 11:05 p.m. Tuesday. Officials with the Rapid City Fire Department did not know at that time what had caused the fire.

A smaller grass fire was reported shortly after 11 p.m. near a campground on Highway 16 just south of Rapid City.

Smaller fires also were reported in Custer. An official with the Cus-

ter County Sheriff's Department said the fires, which were quickly extinguished, were caused by fireworks.

Rapid City police responded to numerous complaints of fireworks being shot off illegally. But no fires were reported within the city as of 11 p.m.

Fire trucks patrolled Skyline Drive late Tuesday night, where hundreds of people had gathered to view fireworks displays. Cars were bumper to bumper on both sides of the road and pedestrians walking on the road held up traffic.

Firefighters to offer to work for less pay

Paulette Tobin 7/12/89
Staff Writer

Firefighters at Rapid City Regional Airport will offer to work for a lower salary in order to keep their jobs at the airport, a union representative said Saturday.

"What we're going to do is give up or forgo the 49 cents an hour that the firefighters receive for providing security out there," Teamsters Business Agent Mark Weber said.

Weber said the firefighters would make the offer Monday to the airport board and to the Rapid City Common Council.

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doing building checks, writing parking tickets and performing other tasks.

The airport board already has authorized its chairman, Tom Zeller, to sign a contract with JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to provide security and fire protection at the airport. The airport said the move would save money.

At a meeting last month Zeller said the airport board still had some questions about JJ Security and did not feel "entirely comfortable" in deciding between the city firefighters and the private security company.

Firefighters and some other city officials are opposed to hiring the private company and have questioned whether it would provide the

Cause of jewelry store fire unclear

7/4/89

Firefighters still do not know what caused a fire Sunday at a Rapid City jewelry company. The fire is still under investigation.

The blaze caused \$8,000 in damage to Ridco Inc. in the 2700 block of Mount Rushmore Road.

Rapid City Fire Marshal Ken Froelich said he was not sure how the fire started, only where it started. Froelich said the fire began outside the building in a pile of boxes. Arson has not been ruled out, but Froelich said the fire could have been ignited accidentally, by cigarettes.



Firefighter douses tree

A fire that was apparently man-caused burned about a one-quarter acre of grass and timber south of Rapid City Regional Hospital Saturday afternoon, including this tree that a firefighter hosed down. Fire Department Captain Gil Gray said he had not determined exactly how the fire was started. (Staff photo by Don Polovich)

"There was a lot of conversation about seeing if we could do some cost-saving measures, both by the union, the city and the airport board; so they could retain the firefighters and not go to the JJ Security bid," Weber said. "...The theory is if we all (firefighters, city and airport board) contributed, maybe we could get it down to where there is no difference in the cost, or very little difference in the cost."

The city firefighters also provide security at the airport terminal by

same protection the airport currently receives.
The Rapid City Common Council will meet at 7:30 a.m. Monday, and the airport board at 8 a.m. Monday. Both meetings will be at the City/School Administration Center.

"This is probably the last meeting on that subject," Airport Executive Director Bill Bacon said. Bacon said he would not recommend to the airport board what its decision should be on hiring the private company. He said board members were keeping an open mind on the issue.

"I think all the board members are very open, and I think whatever is presented to them by the council and by the union on Monday morning probably will be the deciding factor," Bacon said.

Board members contacted on Friday were reluctant to discuss their stands on the issue. But Board Member James Forsyth said the board already voted to hire JJ Security and that the board "is just focused on the due diligence" of the company.

Board chairman Tom Zeller and former chairman Dale Saylor could not be reached for comment.

Airport firefighters

I recently had occasion to land at Rapid City Regional Airport. Your new facilities are outstanding. During my brief stay I learned about the plan to eliminate the professional firefighters stationed at the airport. I am told that three of the seven firemen have over 20 years with the fire department.

I am surprised the people of Rapid City are so willing to trade safety for dollars. Think about what just occurred in Sioux City, Iowa. Most accounts of the accident attribute the impressive survival rate to the level of preparedness. This is where experience counts. Imagine yourself or family in that DC-10 landing at Rapid City Regional next year.

In 1978 I had occasion to experience first hand the importance of professional emergency personnel. I was forced to land my airplane in Rapid City without the landing gear. It was comforting to know professional firefighters were there and ready had I needed them.

MIKE THOMSON 9/5/89
P.O. Box 742
Portales, N.M.

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Unfair labor charge filed against city

Paulette Tobin
Staff Writer

The Teamsters union, on behalf of city police officers and firefighters, has charged the city of Rapid City with unfair labor practices. Teamsters Business Agent Mark Weber said Thursday.

"Our charges are the city did not bargain in good faith, and it did not execute the collective bargaining agreement as it was presented to us," Weber said.

In April, Weber said the city had reneged on the contract that police and firefighters had voted to accept. After the vote, Weber and city Personnel Director Bob Mullally did not agree on the terms of that contract.

City Attorney Mike Diedrich said the Teamsters believed the contract represented what amounted to a 3 percent raise but that the city had offered a 2 percent raise.

The difference between the two figures is about \$80,000 to \$100,000, he said.

"Regardless of the confusion between Mr. Mullally and Mr. Weber, the issue isn't that point of confusion," Diedrich said. "The issue is whether a contract was legally agreed to by both parties, which it wasn't," because the contract had not been approved by the Rapid City Common Council.

The unfair labor charge was filed with the state Department of Labor about May 21, Weber said.

Firefighters' ad opposes hiring of private firm

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

Rapid City firefighters are using radio advertisements, fliers and petitions to pressure public officials not to hire private firefighters at Rapid City Regional Airport.

Firefighter and Teamsters union steward Don Schmol said Thursday the union was spending \$200 to run ads for five mornings on the Breakfast Flakes radio program on KGGG-FM.

"We want to keep those jobs," Schmol said. "Public safety should not be measured in dollars and cents."

On May 8 the Rapid City Regional Airport Board picked JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to replace seven city firefighters on the airport's fire, crash and rescue team.

The board acted after interim airport manager Floyd Matthew estimated the move would save the city at least \$30,000 a year.

However, the airport board's decision was contingent upon completion of a background check on JJ Security and negotiation of details of a contract with the company.

Airport board President Tom Zeller said Thursday he believed the background check on JJ Security was complete.

The airport board will meet Monday in closed session to discuss the contract. Zeller said he did not expect the airport board to announce a decision or make a statement after that meeting.

The board will report Wednesday to the Legal and Finance Committee of the Rapid City Common Council. Zeller said he expected the board to announce then whether it intended to sign a contract with JJ Security.

Meanwhile, city firefighters have not given up trying to keep the seven jobs.

The common council was informed of the charge at a closed session Monday night, Diedrich said. Also in executive session, Weber said, union officials offered the city "some different options" on the contract and asked for a resolution to the dispute.

Diedrich said the council voted to implement the city's final offer, a 2 percent raise to the employees' base pay as of July 1 and a lump sum check based on their salary for the first six months of 1989.

"The council chose (to give the raise) rather than to just be at a stalemate without an agreement on the other side and without any increase to the employees," Diedrich said. The council can give a raise

without the union's agreement on the contract, he said.

"As far as the city is concerned, the city has completed negotiations regarding the 1989 contract," he said.

The state Department of Labor will set a hearing on the labor dispute, and each side will have an opportunity to provide witnesses and documents "similar to a trial," he said.

The time and place of the hearing has not been set.

A final decision on hiring a private company to replace seven city firefighters at Rapid City Regional Airport probably will be delayed until at least July 10, according to airport board President Tom Zeller.

In a report Wednesday to the Rapid City Common Council's Legal and Finance Committee, Zeller said the airport board was still working on details of a contract with JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis. The company specializes in airport security and crash, fire and rescue services.

The airport board already has authorized Zeller to sign the contract, pending negotiation of details. The board also has the authority to hire JJ Security without city council approval, but Zeller said the board did not want to rush into the contract.

"Safety and security are number one," he said. "We're not precluding any alternatives."

Zeller said a background check of JJ Security was complete.

He also said board members had met with Rapid City Fire Chief Jim Tish to review a list of 18 concerns Tish had raised.

For example, Zeller said JJ Security could sign a mutual aid agreement with firefighters at Ellsworth Air Force Base, and he said private firefighters could get "hot fire" training there.

Zeller said JJ Security President Norm Watermolen had agreed to hiring firefighters with a minimum of three years experience.

But Zeller said all five airport board members had not had a chance to meet together to discuss the latest adjustments in the contract and the outcome of the background check. The next airport board meeting is July 10.

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

June 29, 1989

No decision on airport security

City firefighters, who are represented by the Teamsters union, oppose hiring JJ Security.

So do several aldermen. Although they have no authority to stop Zeller from signing the contract, they urged the board to reconsider the contract at the committee meeting Wednesday.

"We've got people out there that have paid a lot of taxes and been out there a long time," Alderman Don Kellar said Wednesday, referring to the city firefighters on the airport's crash, fire and rescue team. "Let's keep them out there."

Alderman Delores Coffing said most people she talked to favored retaining the city firefighters.

Airport officials have estimated that hiring JJ Security would save at least \$50,000 a year. Coffing said that even if the city had to pay more, it would be worth it to keep more experienced city firefighters on the job.

Alderman Alvin Albrecht also said the airport board should continue to use city firefighters.

The fate of the seven city firefighting jobs, should the board hire JJ Security, is still unknown.

Airport firefighters

I am concerned about the proposal to replace trained and experienced firefighters with contract personnel at the Rapid City airport.

Personnel with basic and minimal experience expected and required to make major lifesaving decisions in a matter of seconds in an emergency is not good pre-planning, and certainly not in the best interest of the flying public.

If saving money and barely meeting written requirements is the objective, air travelers should be concerned.

Will contract firefighters be low paid temporary personnel waiting for a better job, thus creating undesirable personnel turnover?

Rapid City firefighters are courageous, well trained and experienced people dedicated to saving life and property and cannot be effectively replaced by personnel with a paying job probably their primary concern.

As a former fire chief of the Ellsworth Air Force Base fire department, I am deeply aware of the necessity of experienced firefighters on a crash rescue crew.

I am concerned we will awake some morning to learn that we did not have the right firefighters at the airport; that we saved little, if any, money; and other things were not saved.

ROLAND GRAY
1929 Red Dale Drive
Rapid City

7/89

Airport board to delay contract report

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

5/23/89

The Rapid City Regional Airport Board wants more time to evaluate a plan to hire a private contractor to provide crash, fire and rescue service at the airport.

On the recommendation of interim airport manager Floyd Matthew, the board voted to delay a report to the Rapid City Common Council until mid-June.

The board met in closed session Monday to discuss contract negotiations with JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis.

On May 8 the airport board had

picked JJ Security to provide crash, fire and rescue service, pending contract negotiations and a background check of the company.

The board also was to report to the city council's Legal and Finance Committee on May 31 on a variety of issues, including what to do with the seven city firefighters that currently comprise the crash and rescue crew.

Matthew said Rapid City Fire Chief Jim Tish and the airport board needed more time to work on that issue and on specific terms of a contract.

"And that doesn't mean that we're going to stay with the concept

of contracting out those services," Matthew said.

He said the airport board would continue to check the background of JJ Security, one of the largest private airport security companies in the nation.

JJ Security was fined \$72,000 by the state of Illinois for not following state regulations on licensing airport security personnel, and in 1986 the company paid \$75,000 to a group of job applicants as a result of a lawsuit by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Matthew said neither the fine nor the suit were related to crash, fire

and rescue services.

But he said the Illinois fine "concerned the board a little" because it involved background checks on employees.

Matthew said the board was less concerned about the EEOC suit because it was possible for a company to find it cheaper to pay a settlement than fight an EEOC lawsuit, even if the company disagreed with the allegations.

JJ Security President Norman Watermolen has denied the company discriminated against the Hispanic and black job applicants named in the suit.

JJ Security fined in Illinois

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

5/20/89

The company picked to operate fire, crash and rescue services at Rapid City Regional Airport recently paid a \$72,000 fine to the state of Illinois, and interim airport Manager Floyd Matthew says he needs more time to investigate the firm before he makes a final recommendation to hire it.

JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., also was sued by the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC) in 1986 and ordered to pay \$75,000 in back pay to Hispanic and black job applicants.

Matthew said he learned of the fine and lawsuit Friday afternoon.

Mayor Keith Carlyle had requested a report from the Rapid City Regional Airport Board by May 31 on details of a contract being negotiated with JJ Security.

"I'm going to ask that it be put on hold for at least two weeks," Matthew said Friday. "I don't think we're ready, and I'm finding enough negative stuff that I have to do some thinking."

On May 8, the airport board chose JJ Security to replace seven city firefighters on the city-owned airport's crash, fire and rescue team. Matthew estimated the charge would save the city at least \$50,000 a year and could save as much as \$70,000 annually after the first year.

Airport managers around the country who have worked with JJ Security gave the company high marks. Matthew said that until recently, all the information he had received about the company was positive. JJ Security is among the three largest private airport security firms in the country.

See President on page A2

Continued from page A1

But the decision to hire JJ Security depends upon a background check and successful negotiation of a contract.

Matthew said JJ Security President Norman Watermolen told him of the Illinois fine in a telephone call Friday afternoon.

"It does concern me," he said. "It indicates a lack of supervisory control."

In January, JJ Security accepted a consent decree with the state of Illinois and paid a \$72,000 fine for failing to follow regulations for licensing airport screening personnel who check passengers and their bags before they board aircraft. The company also was placed on two years probation.

In a telephone interview Friday morning, Watermolen told the Rapid City Journal his company had not properly followed state procedures for background checks, for the company's 233 screeners at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

Watermolen said a licensed investigator hired by the company did not do his job properly. "We did not follow his activities as closely as we should have," he

said.

JJ Security corrected the problems immediately, Watermolen said, and the company continues to screen passengers at O'Hare.

In December 1985, JJ Security was named by CBS News correspondent Mike Wallace in a "60 Minutes" report on lax security at airports throughout the United States.

"He found a way of making us look bad," Watermolen said. "It was highly edited. It looked so nice, but there were some gross misstatements. I don't give much credence to Mike Wallace anymore."

The report alleged that JJ Security did not do adequate background checks on its personnel, a charge a company spokesman denied at the time. CBS News stands by its story, a spokesman said Friday.

JJ Security already screens baggage and passengers at Rapid City Regional Airport. It has done that for several years under a contract with the airlines.

"Those guys do a darn good job," Matthew said. "But I don't know how they screen their personnel. The airlines handle that."

The Rapid City Fire Department provides security throughout the rest of the terminal and grounds. JJ Security would provide all airport

security if their contract were approved.

In 1986, the EEOC sued the company after Hispanic and black job applicants alleged that JJ Security had discriminated against them in 1982 and 1983 by not hiring them for screening jobs at O'Hare.

"We felt it was completely wrong," Watermolen said. "We didn't knowingly do that."

He said paying the \$75,000 settlement was less expensive than fighting the EEOC.

Watermolen also said JJ Security was required to pay some individuals who never had even applied for work at the company.

"We felt that was grossly unfair," he said. "We still do."

Matthew said Friday he had not been aware of the EEOC lawsuit.

The airport board is scheduled to meet in a closed session Monday morning to discuss the JJ Security contract.

"The board will not sign a contract until the background investigation is complete," Matthew said.

The board also will discuss a plan to save the jobs of the seven firefighters who would be replaced by JJ Security, Matthew said, and it will review applicants for a permanent airport manager.

Airport board will consider questions about security

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

5/24/89

This morning the Rapid City Regional Airport Board was scheduled to meet in closed session, in part to discuss the delicate balance between saving money and saving lives.

The airport board voted May 8 to hire JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to replace seven city firefighters on the airport's crash, fire and rescue team. Airport officials say the private company will save the city \$50,000 or more annually.

But interim airport manager Floyd Matthew said the decision to hire JJ Security was contingent upon negotiating a contract that guaranteed the airport would receive adequate protection.

Today's meeting was closed so the board could discuss those negotiations, Matthew said.

Rapid City firefighters oppose the deal. They question whether JJ Security will save the city money and whether the company can provide high-quality protection.

"Our biggest concern is for public safety," said Mark Weber, business agent for Teamsters Local 749, which represents the city firefighters before they report for duty in Rapid City, and where will they get their training?

The preliminary contract requires that the company to provide trained personnel who meet FAA requirements. But only the "lead shift captain" must have prior on-the-job experience — five years as a firefighter and three years as a member of an airport fire, crash and rescue team. The current Rapid City Fire Department crew averages 15 years experience.

JJ Security President Norman Watermolen said he would hire only experienced firefighters and that JJ Security supervisors would provide orientation and training for them at the airport.

Will JJ Security be able to enter mutual aid agreements with other fire departments?

This issue must be negotiated, Matthew said, but JJ Security does so in other states. An Ellsworth Air Force Base spokesman said the base legal department was researching whether it could enter a mutual aid agreement with a private contractor.

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See Airport board on page A2

Would the airport board be replacing professionals with "little more than minimum wage workers," as charged by firefighters and union officials?

Rapid City firefighters make between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year, according to Weber. Watermolen said his firefighters would make "in the high teens."

Will JJ Security provide the same level of airport security that Rapid City firefighters currently provide?

Two firefighters are on duty at the airport around the clock. One is always near the crash truck and the other makes regular rounds of buildings and parking lots.

JJ Security personnel would provide the same coverage, but unlike the Rapid City firefighters, they would not be armed, according to Watermolen.

JJ Security, a pioneer in private crash and rescue service, comes highly recommended by airport managers, but Deputy Fire Chief Dean Reichert said municipal fire chiefs in other states had told him that public safety was compromised when JJ Security crews were hired.

The Rapid City Journal was unable to find any fire chiefs willing to say JJ Security fire crews were unsafe.

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer
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200 'die' in simulated disaster exercise in city

Hugh O'Gara
Staff Writer

To the police dispatcher who receives the call from the Peerless Tyre Store at 1029 Jackson Blvd., the accident sounds routine: A northbound logging truck struck a delivery van that was westbound on Jackson. There is smoke but no fire.

The police dispatcher follows the established routine of sending a police car to the scene and notifying the fire department dispatcher of the injured driver so the Rapid City-Pennington County Ambulance can be sent.

The initial call is followed quickly by a second from Simpson's Printers at 1116 Jackson Blvd. People are having trouble breathing, and an ambulance should be sent immediately.

A second call comes into the dispatch center from Peerless Tyre saying there is a strong odor in the air. Workers are complaining of burning eyes, and they are leaving the area.

This isn't a routine fender bender, and public safety officials begin to scramble.

It wasn't routine but it was a test. A variety of public safety agencies tested their disaster preparedness Thursday in a simulated chemical leak in Rapid City. The "results": 200 dead and an equal number injured.

City police and fire department officers joined other city and county public safety officials to practice how they would handle an accidental leak of chlorine gas, which is used by many Rapid City companies.

In the simulated leak, the 2,000-pound cylinder containing the gas was bound for the city water plant, which actually uses the chemical. The accident was set at a busy intersection near several care centers with a large number of elderly people.

A few deep breaths of chlorine

gas is lethal, and lesser amounts cause severe coughing. In the simulated leak, anyone within 100 yards of the accident was in serious trouble.

Two minutes after the first alert, officials get calls for help from the nearby Clarkson Mountain View Nursing home where 10 people who had been outside are in serious trouble, and many of the other 52 residents are having difficulty breathing.

Police have no self-contained breathing packs so they keep a broad perimeter around the leaking chlorine. Officials ask for air packs from Ellsworth Air Force Base and rural volunteer fire departments, but there aren't enough.

Seven minutes into the simulated disaster, Larry Bray of the Rapid City Fire Department guesses the yellow-green vapor coming from the wreck is chlorine gas. Bray orders an immediate evacuation of the core area around the accident.

Eight minutes after the wreck, reports come into the dispatch center from businesses along the 1000 to 1100 block of Jackson Boulevard of people complaining about difficulty breathing. Bray orders a larger area — two miles long and 1.5 miles wide — evacuated.

The police commander, Lt. Jim Fields, says the evacuation would be "a matter of hours, not minutes ... you have old folks who don't move fast."

Concern begins to center on the Rapid City Care Center and its 99 residents downwind from the gas leak. The accident victims trapped in the vehicles already have been written off as dead from the gas.

That might seem callous, one official says, but you "try and minimize losses."

By the time 11 minutes have passed in the simulated accident, the truck company owners have told disaster officials the contents of the truck, which included chlorine gas

and janitor supplies. Bray worries about an explosion but decides to try something or "people are going to die."

Convention guests at Gill's Sun Inn are frantic. They are told to evacuate to the north immediately but they have no cars. Then run, officials say.

The care center is waiting for an answer on what to do. About 65 percent of the residents need help walking, center personnel say.

"Even if we could get in there and get you out," Bray tells the center representative, "there isn't enough air (packs) to move you." They are told to go to the second floor, seal the windows and stop anything moving air through the building.

Eventually, city workers get to the leaking cylinder and the accident is over.

"Anyone here believe we could have an incident like this and not have 100 or 200 dead?" Bray asked. Officials at the test estimated there would be about 200 fatalities and an equal number of injured.

Officials said a chemical leak like the one in the simulated accident moved too fast before they could find out what they were fighting. And, Bray added, "You have to have all this equipment we don't have."

Officials at the test said they would ask the joint city-county funding committee for money to help set up a response to chemical spills.

Under a federal mandate, a plan to deal with toxic chemical spills has been prepared. It is available to the public at the Rapid City Fire Department headquarters at 10 Main St.

Also available for the public is a list of chemicals stored at businesses in Rapid City and Pennington County.

Thursday's simulated accident was in preparation for a live exercise planned for this fall.

Mayor stands by decision to hire private firefighters

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

5/16/89

Mayor Keith Carlyle pledged Monday evening "not to take a meat ax approach" in replacing city firefighters with a private contractor at Rapid City Regional Airport, but he also vowed to continue to look for ways to save the city money.

Standing by the decision to hire private firefighters, Carlyle scolded critics of the Rapid City Regional Airport Board, saying they had not treated the airport and the private contractor fairly.

Teamsters Local 749 Business Agent Mark Weber had questioned whether hiring private firefighters would save as much money as airport officials have predicted.

"I'm asking you to override the airport board and not do this at all," Weber told Carlyle. "We ask that you not lay these people off."

Rapid City firefighters and their supporters packed council chambers Monday evening to protest the airport board's controversial decision earlier this month to replace seven city firefighters on the airport's crash, fire and rescue team with a private contractor.

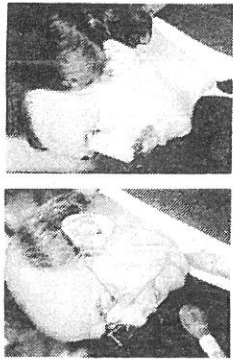
Airport officials say hiring JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., will save the city \$50,000 a year.

Carlyle told Weber the airport



Teamsters Business Agent Mark Weber speaks to common council. (Staff photo by Don Polovich)

See Mayor on page A2



Zeller

Reichert

These include finding out whether private firefighters can train at Ellsworth Air Force Base and whether they can communicate on government radio frequencies during emergencies.

Weber pointed out that city firefighters are trained emergency medical technicians or paramedics. Zeller said the city could negotiate with JJ Security to require its personnel to be EMTs.

Weber also questioned whether the private firefighters would be trained on the job. But Zeller said firefighters hired by JJ Security would be certified before they reported for duty.

And Carlyle said the private firefighters would be able to use city radio frequencies and train at Ellsworth.

"I think we've got a situation where we have a fire chief that is on the verge of being very uncooperative," said Carlyle. "And I've talked to him about that, and I will talk to him about that again."

Continued from page A1

board was an independent body and neither the city council nor mayor had the authority to overrule it.

But Weber said that unless the city laid off the seven city firefighters, there would be no savings to taxpayers.

Carlyle disagreed, saying the firefighters could be integrated back into the regular fire department through attrition and other methods.

The mayor asked airport board President Tom Zeller to report to the council's Legal and Finance Committee on May 31 concerning progress on negotiating details of the contract with JJ Security.

Carlyle said the committee would also get a report on ways to integrate the seven city firefighters into other jobs.

Zeller said JJ Security would not start until Aug. 1 or Sept. 1.

"The airport board has bent over backwards trying to be cooperative on this issue," Carlyle said. "We also have a commitment to those seven people. We're not going to take a meat-ax approach to this thing, and I don't believe JJ Security has been given a fair shake."

Earlier in the meeting Deputy Fire Chief Dean Reichert read a letter to the council from Fire Chief Jim Tish, who could not attend. Tish has opposed hiring JJ Security.

"I would like those people to remain Rapid City Fire Department personnel," Tish wrote. "I know the people who work for us. We develop their standard operating procedures, we know what their performance levels are ..."

Reichert and Tish have said that questions on 18 specific issues should be answered in writing before JJ Security is hired.

Airport change angers city firefighters

Bill Harlan
Staff Writer

5/9/89

Private firefighters will replace a city crew at Rapid City Regional Airport and city firefighters are angry. But

Mayor Keith Carlyle said Monday he would urge that no city workers be laid off.



Carlyle

On Monday the airport board hired JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to provide crash, fire and rescue services at the airport. The company also will provide airport security.

Airport Board President Dale Sayer said the change would save the city at least \$50,000 a year.



Tish

Rapid City Fire Chief Jim Tish accused the board of having "tunnel vision," and criticized the board for replacing long-term city employees who made between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year with "little more than minimum wage people."

Floyd Matthew, a private consultant who is interim airport manager, said wages probably would start at \$5.50 to \$5.75 per hour. Crew supervisors would earn more.

In an interview Monday, Carlyle praised the airport board for trying to save money, but he also said the seven city firefighters at the airport should be transferred to the regular fire department, mainly through attrition.

"But that will take time," the mayor said.

Carlyle said he would urge the airport board to delay the private contract if necessary, to protect the city jobs.

"That way we'll have an efficient cost savings and better employee morale within the (fire) department," he said.

The airport board currently pays the city \$220,000 a year for 24-hour security and fire protection at the airport.

Details of the new contract, worth about \$140,000 a year, still must be negotiated with JJ Security and approved by city attorneys, and city officials still are checking the company's references. But JJ Security could be on the job as early as July 1, Matthew said.

He said he estimated an annual savings of \$50,000 by adding \$30,000 to JJ Security's base bid of \$140,000. The extra \$30,000 was to cover "in-

See Airport on page A2

Continued from page A1
tangible benefits" the airport received by having city firefighters, he said.

But Tish said the airport board had underestimated those intangible benefits and failed to consider how to replace them.

For example, Tish said:

- No one had determined whether the private firefighters would enter into "mutual aid" agreements with nearby fire departments, as the Rapid City Fire Department had.

- No one had determined how JJ Security personnel would be certified and no one had determined who would inspect and certify fire-fighting equipment.

- JJ Security would not be able to use government radio frequencies, making communication more difficult in the event of a major disaster.

- City firefighters currently received "hot fire" training at Ellsworth Air Force Base and JJ Security personnel might not be able to get the same training.

Tish also said that although city crews still would be responsible for providing backup protection at the airport, city firefighters might not be able to train at Ellsworth if they did not have primary responsibility for airport fire protection.

But Matthew said JJ Security personnel would be fully certified and that communication problems could be solved.

He also said the future of hot-fire training at Ellsworth was in doubt anyway because the Environmental Protection Agency was investigating the hot-fire training area at the base.

Personnel policies 5/14/89

Although I'm not well versed on the Rapid City Common Council's decision to hire a private fire fighting firm at the regional airport to save money, I find it interesting that they can do this to their firefighters (to save money), but they were unwilling to hire a

Matthew also said the company would post a \$100,000 performance bond and provide a \$5 million insurance policy. And he said he had contracted seven of 10 airport references provided by JJ Security and all had praised the company's performance.

However, Matthew agreed that JJ Security could not provide exactly the same level of service as city firefighters.

"We're going to have a lesser service," he said.

For example, Matthew said, the private firefighters would not be integrated into the local "emergency response system." That system coordinates the activities of local fire departments and other government agencies during large-scale emergencies.

But Matthew said even city firefighters at the airport were limited in their ability to respond to emergencies off the airport because the Federal Aviation Administration required that the airport's runway be closed if the firefighters left.

Another airport board story is on page B1.

private garbage collection company because they didn't want to put their employees out of work!
JAMES C. SOWERS
Sower's Sanitation
1404 9th Avenue
Belle Fourche

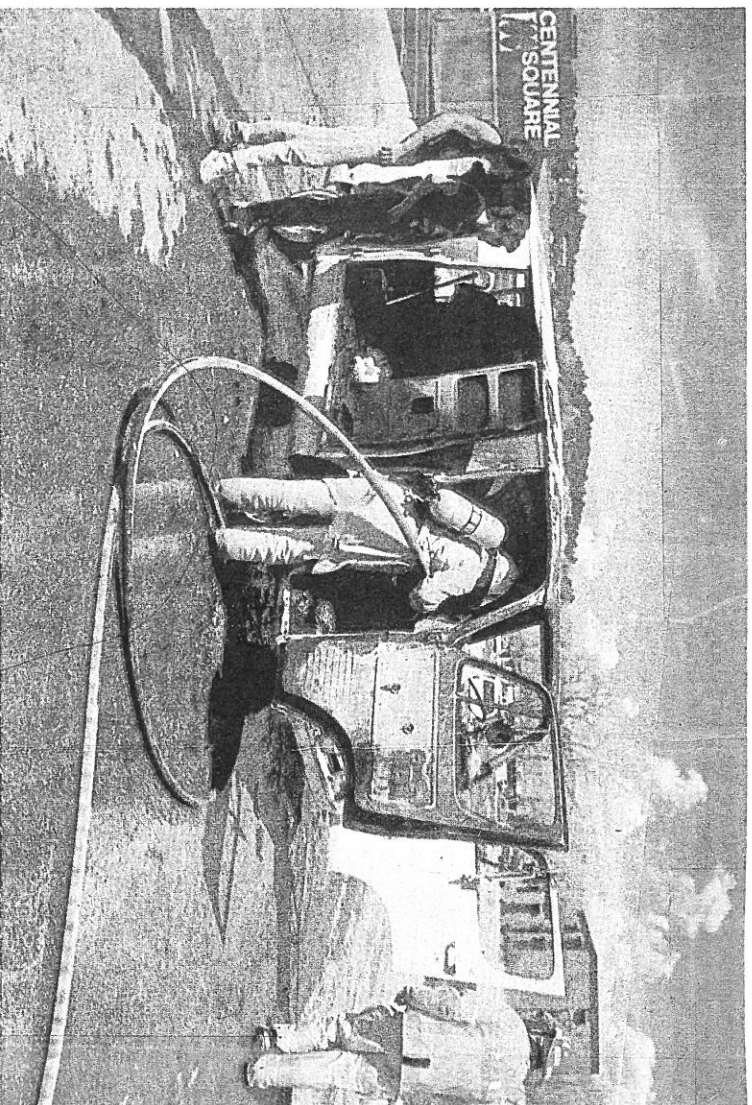
Aiirport fire services 5/14/89

I was amazed when I read in the Rapid City Journal that the airport board was going to "save" \$50,000 by contracting with a firm in Green Bay, Wis. to provide fire protection and security at the airport. Fire Chief Tish called it "tunnel vision." I'd call it short-sighted and irrational.

I use that airport from time to time and I want Rapid City firemen to be there when I'm flying into or out of Rapid City Regional Airport — firemen who are well trained and who care about this community and the people who live here. Anything less than that is unacceptable.

I hope that the citizens of Rapid City will call their city representatives and the airport board to tell them we want and deserve Rapid City firefighters to take care of fire fighting and security at our airport.

BUTCH PAIGE
3501 Idlewild Court
Rapid City



Sorry, bro

5/12/89

Don Harwood borrowed his brother's customized 1968 Chevy van to visit an office in Centennial Square Thursday. He had some explaining to do when he returned it. The van was completely gutted by a fire that erupted in the engine compartment as Harwood drove out of the parking lot onto St. Anne Street near the Sixth Street intersection.

The fire "threw a righteous scare into me," said Harwood who, with companion Bob Christy, escaped without injury. A passing motorist called in a report of the fire on his car phone, Harwood said. (Staff photo by Steve McEnroe)

said.
Zeller said he decided to go ahead

Heat from chimney causes \$2,000 damage in attic fire

The onset of cold weather in the Black Hills this weekend meant more area residents were using their wood stoves and fireplaces. The use of a fireplace by one Rapid City couple proved costly Saturday.

According to Damon Ausmann, Rapid City Fire Department Assistant Chief, the home of Grant Fischer sustained about \$2,000 damage when insulation in the attic near the

chimney caught fire.

Firefighters were called to the Fischer residence at 2119 Ivy about 4 p.m. Saturday. When they got into the attic area, there were flames from combustible material located too near the chimney.

"This is probably the kickoff to our annual problems with chimneys and fireplaces," Ausmann said.

Attic fires like the one Saturday

can be avoided if a boxed area is left around a chimney so that insulation or combustible material will not come in contact with the hot chimney, he said.

"Make sure insulation is proper, and the chimneys are clean," Ausmann said of prevention techniques. "If there are any questions, have a qualified person check the stove installation."

Births
Rapid City Regional Hospital:
Sept. 11 — a boy to William and Marcia Bishop, Hot Springs.
Sept. 12 — a girl to Robert and Patricia Beasley, Rapid City; a boy to Michael and Mary Statz, Rapid City.
Sept. 13 — a boy to Tim & Anita Vix, Wasta; a girl to Steve and Leola Stagner, Lead; a girl to Terry and Connie Freese, Rapid City; a girl to Justin and April Poss, Philip; a girl to Joseph and Myong McDonald, Rapid City; a boy to Charles and Micheal Smith, Jr., Rapid City.

Fire-police appreciation
As a guest of the Rapid City Police and Fire Department association on Saturday afternoon, Aug. 26, we wish to thank them for being such nice hosts, and for the job they are doing for us every day.
We do feel bad that the turnout was small and wonder how many citizens out there realize the terrific job they are doing for us.
LEA AND RAY PARKER
2414 Haney Drive
Rapid City

City home hit with 2nd blaze in 2 days

Firefighters extinguished a blaze about 11 p.m. Saturday at a downtown Rapid City home, the second fire in as many days at the property.

The houses at 417 1/2 Kansas City St. had been the target of an arsonist Friday morning, according to fire investigators.

Just as the earlier fire at the house in the alley between Kansas City and Quincy streets, Saturday's blaze apparently started in a garage and spread to the empty house. The fire was reported around 10 p.m.

and declared out at 10:55 p.m.

Police and sheriff's deputies blocked streets in the area and smoke was billowing through downtown Saturday evening.

Fire department investigators already suspected arson in the first fire as well as three others fires in a five-block area. The fires included a \$500 garage blaze at 18 E. Kansas City St., \$10,000 damage at 21 Kansas City St. to a shed, power pole and two vehicles, and a dumpster fire at 715 E. Boulevard.

Final effort to save firemen's jobs fails

Paulette Tobin
Staff Writer

8/23/89

A motion called a "last-ditch effort" to save the jobs of firefighters at Rapid City Regional Airport was voted down late Monday night by Mayor Keith Carlyle.



Carlyle

The Rapid City Common Council split 5-5 on a motion by Alderman Delores Coffing to have the city attorney draft an ordinance to require the airport board to keep the city firefighters on the job. Carlyle then cast the tie-breaking vote against Coffing's motion.

The airport board authorized its chairman, Tom Zeller, to sign a contract with JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to provide crash, fire and rescue protection at the airport. Airport officials said the move could save the airport between \$42,000 and \$55,000 a year.

See Final on page A2

Airport Executive Director Bill Bacon said Tuesday the contract was being reviewed by the city legal department and had not been signed yet.

Assistant City Attorney Bob Jackson said he was unsure whether the council could require the airport board to keep the firefighters. But Coffing said all she was asking was for an ordinance to be drafted.

"It was a last-ditch effort," Coffing said. "It was merely to draft the ordinance and then we could look at it to see if this was viable."

Voting to draft an ordinance were Aldermen Coffing, Gale Holbrook, Don Kellar, Alvin Albrecht and Carole Hillard. Voting against it were Harold Weiland, Vivian Pappe, Joe Bailey, Ed McLaughlin and Dick Robinson.

Carlyle said the council's authority over the airport board, which is a statutory board, was to approve its budget and, if the council wished, to dissolve the airport board. Kellar asked Coffing Monday night if she wanted to change her motion to dissolve the airport board.

"I would hope he would keep his word and not lay those people off," Weber said.

The mayor has said he did not promise that no one would be laid off, but that he would try to find jobs for the firefighters through attrition and other means.

Coffing said she still hoped the airport would keep the firefighters.

Continued from page A1

Coffing said Tuesday, "... I'm not ready to go that far yet."

The mayor said last week that he would call a news conference to discuss a six-point plan he had developed to deal with the termination of the six firefighters from their airport jobs. On Tuesday he scheduled the news conference for 10:30 a.m. today in his office.

Meanwhile, Teamsters union Business Agent Mark Weber, who represents the firefighters, said the mayor was wrong last week when he said the firefighters' contract did not address which firefighters would lose their jobs in event of a layoff.

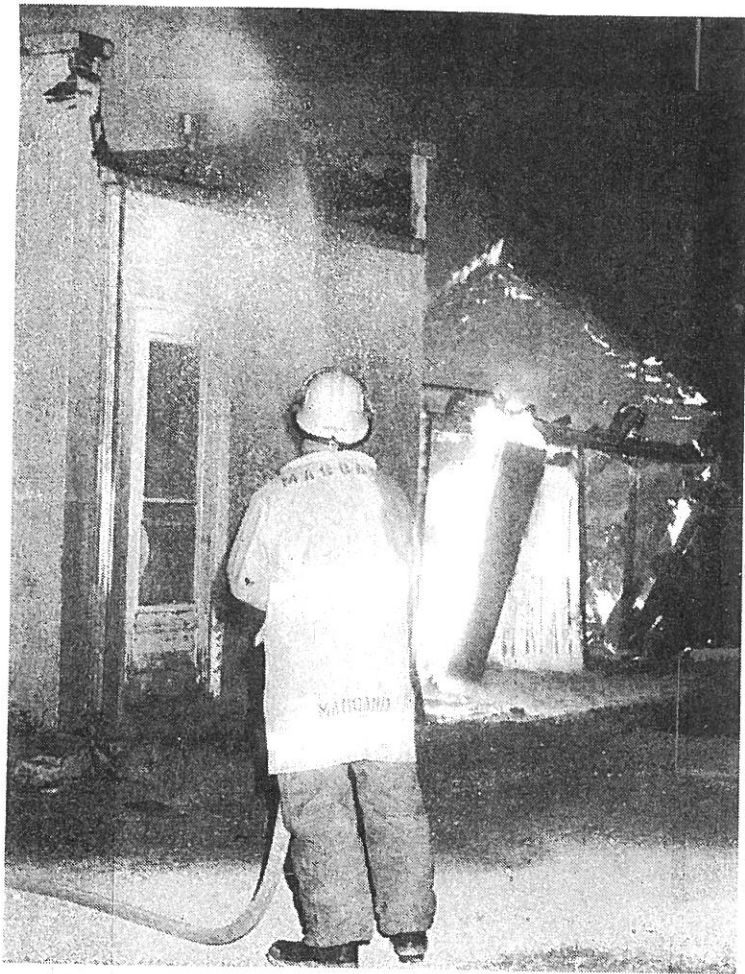
The contract says firefighters would be laid off according to "relative efficiency, necessity of the job entailed, and all others being equal, seniority shall be the determining factor," Weber said.

Weber said Tuesday he had specific dates on which the mayor promised no firefighters would be laid off.

"I may make that motion again at (the council's) Legal and Finance (Committee meeting) to see how it flies," she said. "... I just have to do some investigation between now and the next committee meeting."

Coffing said one of her concerns was how much JJ Security would cost the airport in three years, when its current proposed contract would expire.

"I would wager anybody a hundred bucks that in four years from now the cost will be higher than if we had retained the fire department," Coffing said. "Seems like we're always stepping over dollars to pick up dimes."



A Rapid City fireman pours water on a fire at a small house at 417 1/2 Kansas City St. The house had been the target of an arsonist Friday morning. (Photo by Don Polovich)

Firefighters anxious to see if jobs secure

Paulette Tobin
Staff Writer

Six Rapid City firefighters will be waiting in the next weeks to see whether they keep their jobs after the airport board's decision to hire a private security company at Rapid City Regional Airport.

"What happens to those people, I don't know," said Teamsters Business Agent Mark Weber, who represented the firefighters. "... We hope they will be absorbed (by the fire department)."

The firefighters said they would take a 49-cent-per-hour pay cut to keep their jobs. But even with the estimated \$8,500 savings, the airport



Zeller

Weber

board would have required a city subsidy to pay the firefighters.

Whether the city decides to keep the firefighters on the payroll will be decided later. See **Firefighters** on page A2

Private firefighters

Rapid City Mayor Keith Carlyle's attempt to hire a private company (JJ Security) to protect our airport has me concerned.

Our professional firefighters receive extended training that goes beyond basic knowledge. Due to our blend of rural and city communities, not only can they fight structure fires, but also brush and forest fires.

During my visits to open discussion meetings, I became alarmed over what I learned: JJ Security will be trained in basic fire fighting but will respond to airport crash fires only. Mutual aid from other departments is questionable. They do not have EMT training as our firefighters do now. If additional training is required, costs will be added outside of the current contract.

What ran through my mind was the tragedy of the Westberry Trails fire, which demanded the skills of capable people. Our community worked as a team then, and we may need a team again. But seven firefighters could not respond due to their lack of training. Would the saving of tax dollars be such an issue at that time? **7/25/89**
SALLY KNIGHT
3277 Pioneer Drive
Rapid City

Officials probe apartment fire

7/25/89

Rapid City Fire Department officials continue to investigate a Sunday fire which severely damaged an apartment at 2206 Sixth St.

Investigators said Monday that a cause had not yet been determined for the blaze, which caused approximately \$15,000 damage to one of the three apartments in the building. Fire officials said only the obvious had been ruled out, such as lighting and fireworks.

Cooking and heating also have been eliminated from possible causes.

Nobody was home when the fire was reported.

Light smoke damage was reported in the building's other two apartments, and the basement apartment received some water damage, according to fire officials.

The building is a rental property owned by Terry Rathbun, according to fire department officials.

Jewelry company fire causes \$8,000 in damage

9/5/89

Rapid City fire officials Monday still were investigating the cause of an early Sunday fire that resulted in \$8,000 in damage to the back room of a jewelry company's building.

The fire, reported at 1:35 a.m. Sunday, apparently began in some

boxes near a rear entrance and had spread to an area inside the building by the time firefighters arrived.

The building, owned by Ridco Inc., is located in the 2700 block of Mount Rushmore Road.

No injuries were reported.

Continued from page A1
be up to Mayor Keith Carlyle, said Fire Chief Jim Tish.

Weber said Carlyle had said twice, once in March and again at the State of the City address, that the firefighters would not be laid off if the airport board voted to hire the private security firm.

But at a meeting of the Rapid City Common Council Monday morning, Carlyle said firefighters could keep their jobs by replacing other fire department employees as those employees left their positions.

Tish said the fire department currently has one vacancy and that only one or two jobs for firefighters opened up each year.

The council voted 6-4 Monday to appropriate about \$17,000 out of the council's contingency fund to pay the firefighters through the end of the year. The council also said it would consider paying about \$55,000 in 1990.

The mayor vetoed the council's action. He said he respected the airport board for trying to save money and that the board had determined that the private security company could provide adequate protection. Carlyle also said the security company would hire "at least two" of the firefighters.

—Alderman Alvin Albrecht, Delores Coffing, Gale Holbrook, Don Kellar, Dick Robinson and Carole Hillard voted to subsidize the firefighters. Aldermen Vivian Pappel, Joe Bailey, Harold Weiland and Ed McLaughlin voted no. Seven council votes are needed to override the mayor's veto.

Airport officials said hiring JJ Security of Green Bay, Wis., to replace the firefighters would save the financially strapped airport between \$42,000 and \$55,000 a year. The

board voted last spring to authorize its chairman, Tom Zeller, to sign a three-year contract with JJ Security.

"From the message we got today, it's our intention to proceed with the signing of the JJ Security contract," Zeller said.

If the council would have overridden the mayor's veto, the airport board would have taken that into consideration, he said. But even with an override, airport board members were looking for more than a one-year commitment from the city, he said.

"We're looking at probably a long-term situation here where we may be asking for subsidies," Zeller said. "... If we knew we could count on something in the future and not be left hanging out there in a year or two from now with people saying 'Why didn't you cut the cost?' I think that may make a difference to us now."

At the council meeting Monday morning, Alderman Albrecht said the airport's financial problems were related to the cost of the new airport terminal, which he said "is three times more than what we need for a city this size."

"This is another one of those situations that the workers did not create ... and the workers are taking it in the shorts," Albrecht said. But Bailey said many Rapid City residents, "the very people you're asking to pick up the difference" in paying for the firefighters, also were taking salary cuts.

"Several of our leading employers are paying less money now and less benefits than they were five years ago," Bailey said. "So out there in the real world, it's a tough way to go."

Hillard said she did not want to

sacrifice the current quality of crash, fire and rescue protection at the airport "for what may or may not be a \$40,000 savings."

"I think we've seen in the recent air tragedies the importance of well-trained people to be on the crash site," Hillard said.

Zeller said JJ Security received "excellent references" from the five airports at which it now provides crash, fire and rescue protection.

Pappel, the council liaison to the airport board, said the airport board had considered the safety issue carefully.

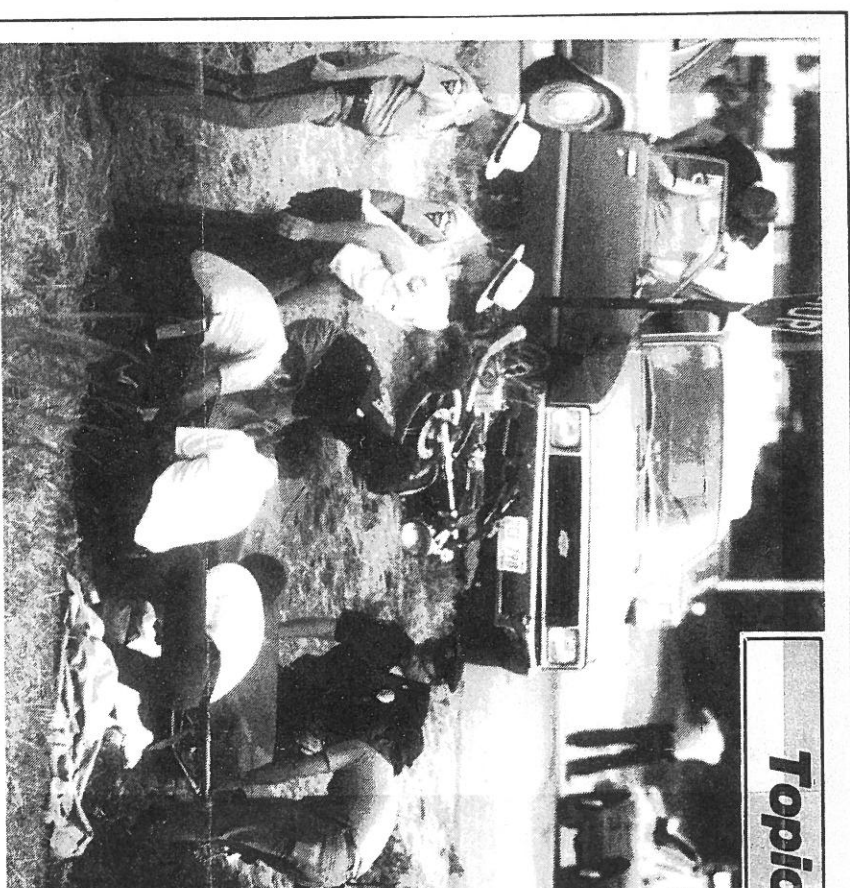
"Eliminating positions out there is not a fun or an easy job for anybody, but people in this community are screaming for a more efficient government," Pappel said. "... I think we should let (the airport board) do their job and stay out of this. ... When do we come to the reality that we have to lose some jobs to save money?"

Pappel also said the firefighters could have taken bigger salary cuts to try to keep their jobs.

"I disagree with that (statement) wholeheartedly," Weber said. "They're not asking anyone else to give up anything. The union members were reluctant to give up anything. Something that stuck in their throats was the mayor gave (Public Works Director) Mike Strub a 19 percent increase."

He said the firefighters in question were paid on average \$20,000 a year, plus benefits.

Firefighters also were concerned that the JJ Security contract gave the company automatic cost-of-living increases even though firefighters had not had a cost-of-living raise for several years, Weber said. Last year, they received a 2 percent raise.



A thorough scene assessment precedes patient evaluation, as shown in this accident scene from the Rapid City area. • Reprinted with permission from the Rapid City Journal.