

SLT spending thousands on salary study

By Kathryn Reed

On a reluctant vote, the South Lake Tahoe City Council unanimously agreed to pay \$22,420 to conduct a citywide total compensation study.

This is to determine how the city's salaries compare to other jurisdictions.

The electeds last year had agreed to do a study for the fire department, with the contract with Bryce Consulting signed in January. An agreement with the general and public works labor groups called for an assessment be done for them as well.

However, at the June 5 meeting not all the councilmembers remembered a closed session discussion where it was decided to do a study for all employees. Interim City Attorney Nira Doherty said that decision did not have to be reported out because it was just direction given to staff.

It has been 11 years since the last study was done.

"I don't think you can have meaningful negotiations without all cards on the table. A big part of that is what everyone else is paying," interim City Manager Dirk Brazil said. (This was his first meeting, with his contract having been agreed to earlier at the meeting.) He said from there the city is honest with what it can afford.

It was pointed out that no matter what the study comes back with the city is not obligated to increase anyone's wages.

Councilmembers Brooke Laine and Tom Davis were most concerned that the study will show South Lake workers are being paid less than their counterparts, but that there won't be money in

the coffers to equalize things. In particular, the looming obligation to pay CalPERS even more for retirees was brought up. In four years that bill is expected to go from \$4.5 million to \$9 million. They were also the ones who didn't recall agreeing to the study. (City Councilman Jason Collin was absent.)