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Vol. 90—No. 247

122 PAGES

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1974

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## Newton Vows Court Fight On Pay Boosts

By **JAN GLIDEWELL**  
Pasco Times Staff Writer

**NEW PORT RICHEY** — Pasco County Circuit Clerk Miller Newton Tuesday vowed court action to challenge the County Commission's decision to grant across-the-board pay raises to employees under the jurisdiction of County Administrator George Knoblock.

The \$10-per-week raise, requested early this month by Knoblock, has been a bone of contention between Knoblock, Newton and the commission

since its quiet introduction at a meeting of the commission's transportation committee.

"I am not against the concept of a raise for these employees, but the words 'across-the-board' lead me to believe that maybe we should be looking at a pay raise for all county employees and not just one group," Newton told the Pasco Times last week.

"There are budgetary and legal considerations to deal with, I just don't think the commission can legally grant

an across-the-board raise without meeting some requirements they haven't met."

**NEWTON SAID** later that he had agreed with the commission's governmental operations committee (commissioners Mathew Prahasky Jr. and Dan Chambers) to hold off consideration of the raise until he could obtain a legal opinion about it.

Visibly upset by Prahasky's introduction of the proposal Tuesday, Newton reminded the commission of his position

as auditor to the county and said, "I do not feel that I can legally implement this raise."

Commission Chairman Walter Voorhees asked County Atty. Peter Dunbar for a legal opinion. Dunbar said the raise is legal.

When Newton tried to interrupt commission action on the matter, Voorhees told him he could "work it out in court."

"I intend to," Newton replied.

Despite reports to the contrary, employees in Newton's office Wednesday denied that

they had received specific orders not to pay the raise.

"I GOT A call from Mr. Newton and he told us not to do anything until he returned from a weekend trip to Tallahassee, but we would have needed him here before we could take any action anyhow," said Gary Humphreys, Newton's financial director.

Commissioner Louie Holt moved to exclude Knoblock from the raise, which will affect about 170 employees and will cost the county about \$70,000 in this budget year —

if it goes into effect.

Holt and Commissioner William Hamilton voted against Knoblock receiving the same \$20 annual raise as the other employees, but commissioners Chambers, Prahasky and Voorhees voted in Knoblock's favor.

The commission ordered the raise effective March 31. The raise includes all county department heads and employees except the sheriff's department and hospital employees and employees in the offices of constitutional officers.



**MILLER NEWTON**  
... increase for all.

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<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=CiUxAAAAIBAJ&sjid=O3MDAAAAIBAJ&pg=1479,1984258&dq=miller-newton&hl=en>