

# STRIKE

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to help out during the declared emergency.

"Under normal circumstances, we presume that a person is ill," Andrews explained. "Today, we presumed that a person was not ill."

Workers who cannot document that they suffer from a bonafide illness will not be given their sick pay and might face disciplinary action, he added.

Daken said city officials are approaching the wildcat strike one day at a time, but he indicated that a prolonged "sick-out" might prompt officials to begin cutting back on city services considered non-essential to the average citizens.

"The ones that impact them the least, in our analysis, would be able to be put on hold or eliminated," he said.

The city manager also expressed

confidence that the union campaign will lose its momentum after members realize that a provision in the forced contract might provide them with a chance to renegotiate.

A "reopener clause" leaves open that possibility if city police officers and firefighters fare better in their current negotiations than the estimated 260 other city workers forced to accept a contract that takes effect Friday.

The forced contract includes wage freezes and numerous cuts in benefits. The city estimates it will save \$87,000 annually with the contract — \$16,000 a year more than would have been saved with the unions' contract proposal.

The vote to impose the new contract was 7 to 1, with Councilman At-Large Leonard Unes voting in opposition because, he said, a resulting strike might cost the city more in intangibles than a settlement would in monetary expense.

Unes attempted to avert the forced contract Tuesday, first by

proposing that a city council committee try negotiating with the unions and then by suggesting that the issue simply be delayed three weeks.

Unes argued that a forced contract could back the unions into a position of having to strike, and cause long-term damage to relations with the city's unions and even hamper efforts to improve Peoria's image nationwide.

"We can't afford any bad press," he said. "We can't afford any more bad news around the United States."

Most other city council members — except Councilman At-Large Dorothy Sinclair, who was absent Tuesday — argued that the forced contract did not include enough concessions to warrant the fierce opposition of the unions.

First District Councilman James Polk also pointed out that city officials must act in the best interest of the city taxpayers by cutting expenses whenever possible.

"It's something that we need to do, and we need to do it for the bene-

fit of everyone," Polk said.

Before the vote, Daken declared that negotiations with the unions had reached what he called "a technical point of impasse."

The city manager said some unions seem to have recognized the need to cut city expenses, but he said months of negotiations have not seen that sympathy transfer over into the form of contract concessions.

"They haven't come as far as we think is prudent in a give-and-take situation," Daken said.

Johnston, however, told the city council he could identify specific contract issues on which his union still is willing to negotiate and compromise.

Later, an angry Johnston told reporters that a contract settlement with the city still was possible and that the council should have delayed action instead of "stuffing it" to the unions.

"The last time something like this happened to me I at least got a kiss out of it," he said. "I'm going to reserve comment because I'm very hot."