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Report Warns of Service Cuts Because of State Budget Crunch

■ **Could you be laid off? Layoffs of City employees could be part of City streamlining, which the report endorses.**

A report filed January 30 by City Administrative Officer William Fujioka details how "service reductions" might be necessary to ease the City's budget crunch over the next two years, caused in part by the State of California's attempts at easing its own budget crisis. "The City must act now to identify ways



William Fujioka,
City Administrative Officer

to offset the proposed reductions of City revenue," the report said.

Those service cuts could mean a loss of City jobs, Fujioka confirmed in press reports in January. "And not minor service cuts ...

very significant service cuts," Fujioka was quoted as saying. The City's austerity measures are being implemented as a response to Governor Gray Davis's budget, released Jan. 10, that eliminated the vehicle license backfill. This funding elimination could cost the City of Los Angeles \$70 million by June and \$175 million in the next fiscal year, according to the report.

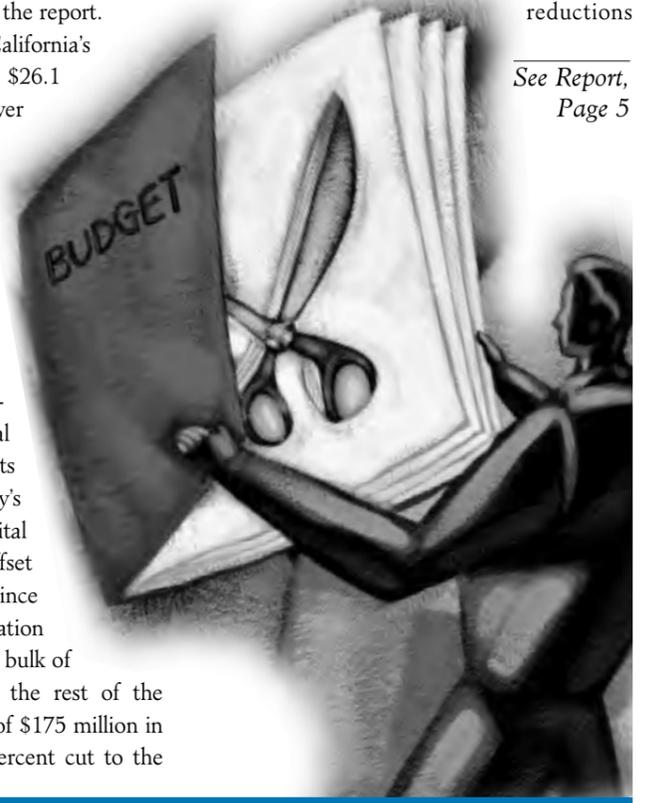
Estimates have placed California's budget deficit at between \$26.1 billion and \$34.6 billion over the next fiscal year.

How big are the Governor's proposed cuts? The report stated it thusly: "To put the Governor's proposed \$175 million VLF revenue cuts for 2003-04 into perspective, the City would have to completely eliminate the General Fund for 23 City departments plus a portion of the City's municipal and physical capital improvement projects to offset the VLF revenue loss ... Since most Police, Fire and Sanitation jobs are deemed critical, the bulk of the reductions will fall on the rest of the City departments. The loss of \$175 million in VLF monies means a 25 percent cut to the

remaining City departments." The report recommended an immediate "first wave of reductions" to protect the City. Those measures, adopted by Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn last month, included a hiring freeze for most City departments.

The "next round of budget reductions

See Report, Page 5



Membership Fees Pay for Many Valuable Benefits

As of April 1, 2003 (the end of the free six-month membership period) the City Employees Club of Los Angeles will begin assessing its \$4 monthly fee (\$2 per pay period) to its active members. Retirees pay \$2 per month.

Club members will begin to see the line item as part of their payroll deduction.

The membership fee pays for the many valuable advantages of Club membership and is roughly the same as the fee for other

benefit-based employee clubs and associations. See related stories.

Over the past several months, Club membership has grown to more than 13,000 members.

Last October, after 74 years, the Los Angeles City Employees Association (LACEA, the "green tree" people) changed its focus, outreach and name. The same high-level, low-cost insurance services; refund checks; and high level of customer service remain. LACEA is now the **City Employees Club of Los Angeles** and offers more value and benefits to its members.

For questions regarding the fees, or if your account is not correct, contact the Club at (213) 620-0388 or connect via e-mail: info@cityemployeesclub.com

Benefits Continue to Build: Club Membership Is Better Than Ever

■ **Become a member, or stay a member: If you don't belong, you're missing out!**

Ever since the new City Employees Club was formed last October, it has always been about community—building a great feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood among City employees and retirees, and their families.

But with great benefits every month, there's never been a better time to be a member! Discounts ... exclusive merchandise ... this great newspaper ... events ... free classifieds ... and the finest insurance

services available: There's just no reason not to be a Club member.

And benefits are being added all the time. This just in: The Club card gets you discounts at over thirty Acapulco and El Torito restaurants.

Enjoy the new era of being a City employee!

See Benefits, Page 3



Enjoy a fun-filled day at California Adventure, one of many discount admissions available through the Club.



City Employees Club
LOS ANGELES

Serving City Employees since 1928 as the Los Angeles City Employees Association

City Employees Club of Los Angeles
350 S. Figueroa St., Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90071

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Members Speak Out

■ Retirees: Check the Facts Before Moving Outside Coverage Area

Health insurance can become a big problem for any L.A. City retiree who moves outside the coverage area, especially if they are under 65, not yet qualified for Medicare.

Most of the covered area ends around Sacramento, where the last Kaiser Hospital is. Above this they will have to find an insurance company that will insure them and their spouse for the amount provided by the City insurance premium reimbursement program.

The cost of this insurance will vary depending on individual health problems, and some drugs prescribed by a previous doctor. These same factors can disqualify the applicant or their spouse.

My wife and I moved to Northern California near Redding, the largest city north of Sacramento. Had we stayed nearer to Sacramento, we could have retained our Kaiser plan, fully paid by the City. Since we chose the Redding area, we had only one choice for insurance, an HMO provided by Blue Cross. The cost was just a little more than the reimbursement from the City, but that lasted just one year. Then Blue Cross changed the plan to a PPO and more than doubled the cost, which added \$825 per month after the City reimbursement.

I realize health insurance has become a national problem on all levels, but if you're covered by Medicare or plan to live within the coverage area, be sure you have all the facts and know all your options before you finalize your retirement.

Ed Baier
Retired City employee

■ Guardrails Could Protect Fire Hydrants, Save Water

I have been with the City's Cultural Affairs Department for 34 years, the last 11 years located on 4th and Spring. Within these 11 years, I have noticed the fire hydrant on 2nd and Spring being hit by traffic several times (at least every other year), and water spouting out for a couple of hours or so each time.

Which brought to mind, how many other areas throughout the City have this problem? And would it behoove the City to put up a couple of guardrails around these problem areas, and/or move the hydrants a couple of feet one direction or another?

It just seems that it would save many, many gallons of water going down the drain.

Just a thought.

Guadalupe Terronez
Cultural Affairs Dept.

■ Club Tickets Lead Her to Lovely Day at Aquarium

Today I took my two little boys, Noah and Isaiah, to the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach. (I bought the discount tickets through The Ticket Guy here at the Club. Thanks, Ticket Guy!)

It was a wet, stormy day, perfect for spending the day indoors with God's water creatures. I've been to Boston's aquarium and I've been to Monterey's, but this was my first visit to our aquarium here in southern California.

As the boys and I approached the entrance, we were covered in raindrops as the clouds encircled us, creating a kind of peace. In the distance we could see a lighthouse and beyond that we could see the Queen Mary in all her glory. Upon entering the huge water museum, our picture was taken and two very welcoming smiling faces greeted us. Immediately our eyes were drawn up to an enormous, life-size model of a Baleen whale that hung from the ceiling, giving us an awesome perspective of the great size of this animal.

Our first stop and most magical one was the home of the jellyfish. I never really thought much about jellyfish, but after seeing this exhibit I have a whole new respect for this beautiful fish. As we entered it was mostly dark except for the various lights inside the tanks that lit up each jellyfish as they gracefully danced around. It was hypnotic watching them as they seemed to be moving in slow motion. There was an East Coast Jelly, a West Coast Jelly, a Fried Egg Jelly and many more, but my most favorite one was the Moon Jellyfish. I could have stayed and watched these bizarre creatures all day.

We then decided to travel outside to the Shark Lagoon, where we

were able to actually touch sharks, stingrays, sea cucumbers, starfish and a variety of sea life. It was so neat for me as well as for Noah and Isaiah to be able to see close up what these fish look and feel like. Noah, my 6-year-old, was a little apprehensive, but not my little fearless 2-year-old Isaiah. He dove right in (not literally) and was up to his elbows in seawater, laughing and squealing as little sharks slipped through his fingertips.

We then decided to venture back inside to dry off and explore the rest of the aquarium. We watched sea lions swimming around in a tank that encircled us, creating the illusion that we were in there with them. Isaiah giggled as these happy-go-lucky mammals zoomed by. We saw tropical fish of every color imaginable and eels of every size and shape as they peeked their heads out from underneath rocks and from behind beautiful displays of multi-colored coral. We experienced so much it's hard to remember now everything we saw. It was definitely a feast for your eyes! I can't wait to go back!

I highly recommend that you visit this awesome display of sea life. Pack a lunch or eat in the café, but either way you can grab a table and dine overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It's cozy and clean, and if you're lucky enough maybe off in the distance the "Queen" (Mary that is) will wink at you.

Oh, I almost forgot, make sure you find the sea dragons. You won't believe your eyes when you catch a glimpse of one of these. They are so bizarre-looking it's hard to believe they're real.

So whether you round up the kids, your mom, your sweetheart or your best friend, gather up your sense of wonder and go spend the day at The Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach and remember to visit the jellyfish. I promise they will leave you in awe!

Kelley Hawkins
Club member



Wanna be heard?

Write to us! It's **your** page. *Have something to say? Overjoyed about something? Angered? Just have a question?* Here's your chance to get it off your chest... and get it into print. (We'll print what we can.) Share your ideas with your City family. Don't wait! Send them to talkback@cityemployeesclub.com

Membership Has Its Privileges

Benefits

Continued from Page 1

Being a member of the Club does great things for you:

- You'll belong to a real community that values what you have to say, that knows you work hard, that rewards you with discounts to area attractions, and that keeps you in touch with hot City issues and each other.
- Great insurance programs, of course, including our famous refund check.
- A fantastic newspaper, which has been getting rave reviews (officials throughout the city, even councilmembers, have signed up to receive it). Your voice is being heard! In addition to its acceptance, it also carries the good news of your births, promotions, retirements, etc.
- An easy-to-remember e-mail address, for all your Club questions (including insurance): alive@cityemployeesclub.com
- A great new Website, for instant information at your fingertips: www.cityemployeesclub.com

- Discounts, discounts, discounts! The new Club membership card works hard for you: It knows that you have bills to pay, children to raise and ends to meet, so it offers you discounts to a variety of restaurants, shops and attractions to make your life more rewarding. The more you use it, the more you save.

- Fun events, including the terrific ClubFest, an annual party that gets everyone together for fun, food, prizes and entertainment.

Participation in the Club is simple

All Club members (including those who participate in Club insurance programs, and those who do not) pay \$2 per pay period (automatic deduction twice per month). Retired Club members pay just \$2 per month.

So enjoy being a part of this great family. Get connected. Let us know what you think, and we'll try to print it. Tell us of your births, promotions, retirements. Send in those classifieds. Use your Club to save your hard-earned money.

Be proud of being a City employee. Take advantage. You deserve it. 



Members get Discount Tickets for movies, attractions, and merchandise. Plus restaurant and retail discounts with your Club Membership Card.

SEE PAGES 10-11 FOR THE LATEST DISCOUNT OFFERS!





Budget: Service Cuts Coming?

Report

Continued from Page 1

will be more difficult and will begin to affect services," the report said. "While the City needs to act in a timely manner to offset forecasted shortfalls, it is important that any service level reductions recommended be made in a carefully structured manner and in consultation with departments."

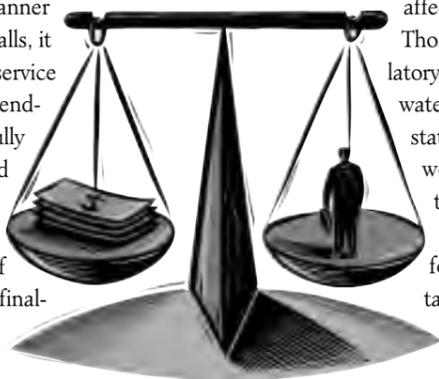
This "next round of reductions" has not been finalized, so there is nothing new to report about specifics of any layoffs at this time.

However, the report offered Feb. 19 as a deadline for the City Administrative Officer to report back on additional budget recom-

mendations for this fiscal year. Those recommendations may or may not include layoffs. That date was after *Alive!*'s press deadline.

The report cites other factors besides the State's budget crunch that are negatively affecting the City's budget. Those factors include regulatory mandates for air and water quality management, state legislation regarding workers' compensation, the stock market decline, and underperforming revenue from taxes on hotels, utilities and general sales.

The report, filed by Fujioka, was signed by Raymond Ciranna, Finance Specialist III, and approved by Ellen F. Sandt, Assistant City Administrative Officer. ■



Below are some highlights of recommendations made in the report that might affect your job:

20. "Freeze all departmental positions that have been vacant for more than one year ... and instruct departments to not fill these positions for the remainder of the fiscal year. These positions are recommended for elimination in the Proposed Budget. Departments that believe that one or more positions are critical to their operations are instructed to resubmit justification to continue those positions in fiscal year 2003-04.
21. Instruct the Fire Department to postpone the June 2003 recruit training class until July 2003.
22. Authorize the City Administrative Officer to identify actions needed to consolidate various City functions and operations to achieve budgetary savings.
23. Instruct department heads, working with the City Administrative Officer, to analyze their departmental operations to identify reductions or efficiencies in management, administrative and support services so that savings may be used to fund service operations."

In another section, the report specifies how cuts should be approached:

"Any cuts that the City must make to maintain a balanced budget should first be focused on internal changes, which do not directly impact public services. Departmental operations should also be reviewed to see where streamlined programs, services or procedures could make City government more efficient. The streamlining process should begin at the departmental level, but at the same time, our Office [City Administrative Officer] will develop other broader proposals to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy throughout the City. These actions should be initiated before service levels are impacted or reduced.

City departments heads should immediately begin restructuring their organizations to reduce the number of management, administration and support staff. Particular attention should be paid to organizational principles such as the number of 'direct reports' for supervisory and management positions. Where appropriate, these extra layers of management should be eliminated.

Discretionary expenditures should also be carefully reviewed to identify items that may be deferred or canceled completely (supplies, contracts, equipment, etc.).

Department heads should identify their core and discretionary services. Staffing to continue core services should be tied to workload. Department heads should also determine which small programs or related programs can be internally consolidated to minimize duplicate management and support functions. Savings from these types of consolidations can then be used to preserve core programs and services.

The City has about 45 departments, bureaus and offices. Most other cities do not have

separate departments, management and administrative support for specialized functions. As part of our analysis on City streamlining, this Office will identify potential savings and efficiencies that may be achieved by consolidating departmental functions. This Office believes there may be significant savings from ideas such as:

- consolidating small departments;
- consolidating grant-funded departments;
- consolidating inspection programs throughout the City;
- consolidating fleet operations;
- combining the General Services Construction and Building Maintenance Divisions;
- consolidating test laboratories;
- consolidating select contract review functions;
- consolidating the Police permitting function into the Office of Finance;
- consolidating selected call centers into the 311 center;
- consolidating departments' leased storage for documents into the City Clerk's Central Records facility.

The recommendations listed above constitute an initial list of potential consolidations. As we continue our analysis of City programs and services, we will identify other areas for consolidation. Savings from consolidations and streamlining will be needed to help fund core programs in the 2003-04 budget." ■

Each month, Alive! invites political leaders to speak directly to City and DWP employees and retirees. Alive! brings you these views as a public service. The opinions of those on this monthly column are independent of Alive! and the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.



TeamWork LA Moves Forward To Solve Neighborhood Problems

by Mayor James K. Hahn

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the City of Los Angeles.

Last December we unveiled TeamWork LA, a new initiative that brings together representatives from the Mayor's Office and other city departments to solve problems in neighborhoods across our city. Already, there are many examples of how TeamWork LA is cleaning up our communities and working to make them safer.

At our first North Valley Neighborhood Service Cabinet meeting, the Devonshire Police Division asked other city departments for assistance with removing several pay phones from the intersection of Parthenia and Cedros Avenues. The phones have been a haven for loitering and drug sales.

Through our new TeamWork LA initiative, we quickly solved this problem. Representatives from Public Works, the City Attorney's Office, Street Services, and the City's Information Technology Agency who are part of TeamWork LA's North Valley Service Cabinet, worked together to remove these nuisance phones.

The removal of the pay phones is a great example of what City government can do with existing resources to make our neighborhoods safer. It also shows that when City departments collaborate, we can work more efficiently and effectively to solve problems.

I look forward to seeing more successful results of our collaboration through TeamWork LA. ■



Great Service Is Essential, Even in Times of Change

by Ruth Galanter
Councilmember, Sixth District

In the last 16 years, I've represented the West Side, the airport area, Baldwin Hills, Leimert Park, Crenshaw, and now the Northeast Valley. I've seen firsthand that the City is indeed diverse, but I've also seen firsthand that regardless of ethnicity, geography or income, everyone's goals are the same: a decent place to live, a good job, the ability to get around, safety, good schools, good health care, and places to play.

I've spent most of my 16 years resolving long-standing problems. For instance, Venice residents argued for more than 50 years before the historic canals were restored. The residents of Good Shepherd Manor in Leimert asked for a traffic light for 18 years before I was able to get it installed. Sun Valley is to this day without a single storm drain to relieve the annual flooding.

It often takes longer to reach agreement about what should be done than it takes to do the actual work, but each new problem has some similarities to earlier problems, so having resolved one makes it easier to resolve the next one.

City government is different now from when I started. In 1987 there were four councilmembers with more than 20 years' experience. Thanks to term limits, there will never again be a City elected official with more than eight years' experience, and the eight-year veterans will be moving on. On-the-job training works well for some occupations, but the voters of Los Angeles expect their new officials to already know everything their former officials knew. Who will help the new members acquire the experience to resolve issues quickly?

Like the elected offices, the corps of general managers has seen remarkable turnover in recent years. Mayor Riordan made an almost clean sweep, and Mayor Hahn has also begun making changes. Who will help the new general managers learn how best to deal with the elected officials and with our constituents?

Change is necessary and inevitable. Change can be exciting but also scary. Our challenge is to continue providing cost-effective responsive service no matter how turbulent the winds of change. ■