

El Dorado supervisors spare seniors programs, target Sheriff's Office

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El Dorado County supervisors backed away from slashing senior programs but wielded a sharp ax to cut the Sheriff's Office.

In a marathon meeting Monday, the supervisors considered \$5.5 million in cuts suggested by budgeting staffers. The proposed cuts were intended as a first step in confronting a projected \$11 million deficit for the 2011-12 budget year.

The chief administrative officer's recommendations included cutting more than half the community service senior programs.

That \$675,000 cut would have shuttered a senior day service and turned a hot meals program for seniors into a frozen meal delivery program.

Supervisors declined to make cuts to that.

"We were very, very grateful," said Jan Walker-Conroy, assistant director off the county's Department of Human Services.

The board went ahead and cut \$1.13 million from the Sheriff's Office, as proposed by the CAO.

Those cuts will come from reductions in deputies, correctional and community service officers, said Sheriff Fred Kollar. The six positions affected are vacant, he said.

There are also savings from tighter controls on court-services contracts and overtime, Kollar said.

An additional \$180,000 in approved cuts will be worked out with incoming Sheriff John D'Agostini, Kollar said.

In the end, the supervisors approved nearly \$4 million in cuts, sparing the county's history museum and cooperative extension program, but slicing from veteran affairs, parks maintenance and economic development.

The services protected "are the programs that represent our responsibility as a local jurisdiction to protect the quality of life for those individuals, particularly seniors and our youth, as we move forward through these very difficult times," said Norma Santiago, chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors.

Santiago voted to save more of the programs, she said.

"I didn't think it went far enough," she said of the supervisors' actions to save services.

They ended up cutting veteran affairs and economic development funding that she would have

saved, she said.

Nevertheless, the county will likely have to make additional cuts in June.

Those cuts have been estimated at \$7 million, but the final figure will depend on county revenues and the state budget.

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