



Sobering Budget Hearing At The City

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By Alison St. John

The San Diego City Council held the first of three hearings yesterday on the Mayor's proposed budget cuts. In previous years, councilmembers objected vociferously to many of the mayor's proposals and has reversed some of them.

This year, the severity of the \$179 million deficit has led to a sober consideration of the options.

Murtaza Baxamusa of the Council on Policy Initiatives, a think tank for working families, was one of those who participated in the public hearing. He says the mood this year is different.

"At this point people are so serious about it," Baxamusa said. "There are no gimmicks, no pretense going on - these are real cuts to services. And it's a pretty honest discussion, the mayor has laid it all out on the table."

The mayor's proposals would cut over \$44 million from police and fire budgets. No sworn officers would lose their jobs, but dozens of civilians in the police department would, leaving officers to take over their duties.

The city council holds two more public hearings before making a decision on the budget Dec 14th. The spending plan covers the next 18 months, and hopes to reduce future cuts by tackling the shortfall immediately.