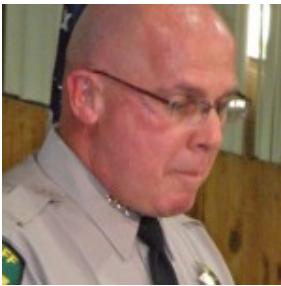


El Dorado County budget cuts touch nearly every sector

By Kathryn Reed

The man who oversees the department that accounts for the largest expense on El Dorado County's ledger will face his five bosses Monday.

Sheriff Fred Kollar isn't planning to go into the Board of Supervisors room with guns drawn, but he also isn't about roll over and play dead even though he'll be retiring when the next sheriff takes office in January.



Fred Kollar

To close the \$11 million deficit for fiscal year 2011-12 that begins July 1, the county wants to make half the cuts by the end of the year and the next \$5.5 million in the first two months of 2011.

The Chief Administrative Office is proposing a 2.7 percent across the board cut for law and justice that would total \$1.6 million. The sheriff's department would lose \$1.13 million, probation \$264,725, district attorney \$152,056, and public defender \$74,388.

"The 2.7 percent is somewhat deceptive," Kollar told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Through early retirement we are going to eliminate 15 positions, which exceeds \$1.5 million, so really

it is almost 6 percent.”

One thing Kollar knows he will lobby for at the Nov. 1 meeting is to have his old job, that of undersheriff, be put back on the books. When Kollar took over for Jeff Neves, who left office last December before his term was up, undersheriff was wiped off the books instead of just being unfunded.

He is crunching the numbers to see what more could be cut.

“Part of meeting the \$1.2 million might be what our organizational structure looks like,” Kollar said. “I want to spend time with the new sheriff. These don’t have to go into affect until Jan. 1. I don’t want to do anything significant to the department and have the new sheriff undo it.”

Human Services Department

For Daniel Nielson, director of the Human Services Department, he is slated to talk to the board Nov. 3.

For now, the \$400,000 proposed to be slashed from the Community Service Aging Programs would mean eliminating five of the seven sites where meals are served to seniors. The South Lake Tahoe and Placerville centers are being funded – for now – in this first round of cuts, Nielson told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But the cuts mean 25 percent of the seniors getting a hot meal from one of the facilities on the chopping block would not get that meal. Instead, a frozen meal would be delivered, and perhaps once a week instead of five times. This is because health code mandates a hot meal be delivered at a certain temp, and increasing the driving distance won’t allow for that to happen.

Nielson is cognizant it will be a different type of delivered meal. The fresh food, like a salad, will be gone. He also knows the personal connection of the homebound senior and the

meal deliverer is huge. But this program is a drain on the bottom line.

The suggested donation for a meal is \$3 – eating it at a facility or having it delivered. In 2009-10, the average donation at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center was \$1.81 and \$2.66 in Placerville. The average collected for home delivery in South Tahoe was 83 cents in that same fiscal year and \$1.59 in El Dorado Hills.

El Dorado County served 59,402 meals at its facilities in 2009-10, while 81,761 meals were delivered.

In South Lake Tahoe, there were 10,179 congregate meals served to 1,003 people and 19,547 meals delivered to 645 people.

Tahoe budget meeting

The county conducted an information meeting in South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 25 about the proposed budget cuts. Seven members of the public (the city attorney, a council candidate, two county employees, two concerned citizens), three media reps and three county staffers were there.

County officials weren't too disappointed by the turnout considering the Placerville meeting had 30 people.

Concerns that night centered on worries the basin will take a harder hit. (Staff said supes wants to play fair.) Employees questioned their plight compared to managers. (Everyone will be hit, though negotiations are going on now with the county's 15 labor units so nothing is solidified.) Questions about the \$540,000 promotions budget not being touched were raised. (The pledge is being honored to reinvest at least half what is brought in with the hotel tax back into tourism.) Snow removal concerns were voiced. (It won't be impacted.)

"What is it that we don't get when we cut people?" Rhonda McFarlane asked.

Terry Daly, assistant chief administrative officer, said, "We are trying and looking at ways to minimize service cuts. We are working with others to eliminate redundancy. But you are right. If the board decides to cut the UC Extension and your child is in 4-H, that is the service cut."

The Board of Supervisors anticipates taking action on the proposed budget cuts Nov. 15.