

Placer County expected to pass budget 3 months late

The \$715.2 million budget for 2013-14 that the Placer County Board of Supervisors are expected to approve Sept. 24 is 2.1 percent less than last year's budget.

Supervisors were updated Aug. 15 on what the next fiscal year looks like during a budget workshop. A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for Sept. 10, with adoption two weeks later.

In June, the board approved an interim budget of \$690.5 million since the 2013-14 fiscal year began July 1.

Supervisors postponed making a decision Thursday on how to allocate more than \$8 million in unallocated one-time funds, a total that includes almost \$5.8 million in the general fund and \$2.3 million in the public safety fund. That decision could be made at the Aug. 20 board meeting.

Staff is recommending the bulk of the funds be used to help return county reserve and contingency funds to pre-recession levels.

"We have some reasons for optimism," Chief Assistant County Executive Officer Holly Heinzen told the board. "At the same time, we have some reasons for caution."

Key reasons for optimism include the county's improving revenue picture and past board actions that have helped keep costs pressures under control.

Reasons to be cautious include the expense of employee benefits, state and federal actions that affect counties and the need to open and operate Placer County's new jail in Roseville.

During the workshop departments made presentations to the board.

Priority-based budgeting is an approach that seeks to increase transparency in the budget process while helping ensure county resources are allocated based on board and public priorities.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report