

City must cut back services by \$1.2 million before July

By Gabriel Boehmer
Of the Emerald

Unlike the federal government, the City of Eugene cannot spend more money than it makes.

This poses a problem for City Manager Mike Gleason, who says the city will spend an estimated \$1.2 million more this fiscal year than it will collect.

As a consequence, Gleason announced Tuesday his plans to cut services to ensure the city has enough money to begin its new fiscal year in July.

Gleason's proposal includes laying off as many as 37 full-time city employees and budget cuts for all city departments.

The city will save \$400,000 by reducing spending for travel, supplies, training, postage, temporary help and contract services.

Another \$300,000 will be saved by cutting 30 to 37 full-time employees. Adding those layoffs to the number of vacant positions not being filled, the city work force will be reduced by about eight percent.

"We consider displaced employees to be a valuable resource, and every attempt will be made to retain them in the organization," Gleason said.

He attributes part of the imbalance of spending and revenue to lagging collection of property taxes.

Targets of the spending cutback include cultural and recreational programs, public safety services and city administration, Gleason said.

The Library will be open 6 to 10 hours fewer per week and about 30 part-time employees will be released, he said. In addition, all new book purchases will be stopped and library service fees may be increased.

Recreation programs will be reduced, particularly those not supported by user fees. Those programs already charging user fees will increase the fees to pay the program's entire cost.

Maintenance for parks and equipment will

also be reduced. Gleason said he also recommends delaying repairs for the Jefferson Memorial Pool.

Trial delays in municipal courts will increase to 125 days from the current 50-day wait. Less time will be spent providing legal services for prosecuting and defending cases and the number of judicial hearings will be curtailed.

The traffic patrol division of the police department will be cut, eliminating 13 positions. As a result, the number of citations issued and the revenue the division generates will be reduced, Gleason said.

"There will also be a reduction in some of the services people receive when we follow up on accidents and misdemeanor crimes," Gleason added.

In the fire department, satellite station Number 10 at Bailey Hill Road — opened earlier this year — will be unstaffed and vacant, Gleason said. Station Number 7 will be staffed on a relief-available basis, while station numbers 6 and 3 will become satellite facilities rather than "attack vehicle stations", he said.

"Most of those deployments were set up to take advantage of increased growth in urban areas. We feel we can delay that deployment since the growth hasn't taken place at the same pace, and still have essentially the same response pattern," Gleason said.

The public works department will reduce street maintenance, trash collection downtown, graveling and grading of unimproved streets and alleys and maintenance of storm drains and street repair, Gleason said. No new street lights would be installed, he added.

City management operations such as accounting, data processing and staff services will also be reduced.

Finally, the city will make less of a contribution to inter-governmental funds in Lane County, such as the Lane Council of Governments.

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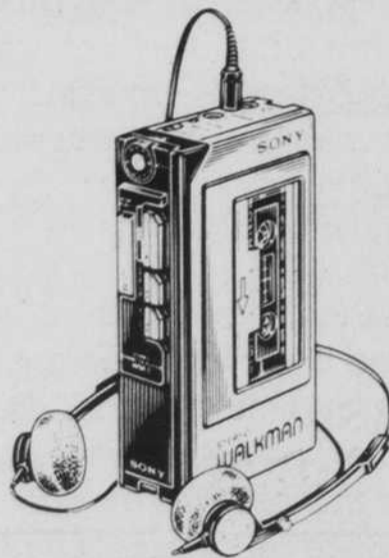
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