

## Carmen Chu's take on the new city budget

Rachel Gordon – City Insider



*Carmen Chu: Maybe, probably, budget approval will be unanimous.*

The Board of Supervisors will take its first of two scheduled votes on San Francisco's new \$6.8 billion budget Tuesday, and fingers crossed, said Supervisor Carmen Chu, support will be unanimous.

"I think we have a good chance," Chu, chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors' Budget Committee, said Wednesday.

She said that despite the last-minute hitch over Mayor Ed Lee's push to contract out security services at San Francisco's two public hospitals -- the city's largest public employees' union eventually succeeded in getting supervisors to carve that proposal out of the budget after marathon arm-twisting behind closed doors -- "It was a fairly peaceful budget process this year."

In the end, she said, the city budget packaged approved by her committee, with recommendation for approval by the full board, managed to save most health and human services that had been targeted for cuts. Money also was included to fund a new Police Academy class.

Fee increases, for the most part, were modest, tied to cost-of-living adjustments. But people will be paying more for things such as renting a cabin at Camp Mather, securing a police permit to operate a circus, removing a disabling wheel boot from vehicles and getting married at City Hall.

The proposed budget doesn't include enough money to keep the city from shifting costs to some private property owners for the upkeep of street trees or to allow each of the 11 supervisors to hire a third aide, as some had wanted.

And, said Micki Callahan, San Francisco's director of Human Services, fewer than a dozen of the 26,000 employees on the city payroll lost their jobs.

There also are a few lingering uncertainties, including how to fully fund the city Redevelopment Agency and the added criminal justice burdens on the city once the state diverts offenders from state prison to local jails and probation. Some money will be dependent on San Francisco voters, Chu said, with plans under way for November ballot measures to raise the sales tax and to reform the pension system for city workers.



*One of the casualties of this year's budget: Carmen Chu's sage plant in her City Hall office. The Budget Committee chair spent too much time crunching numbers and not enough time watering.*

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