

## S.F. officials scramble to fashion final budget

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City Hall officials in San Francisco were huddled behind closed doors Thursday evening, trying to figure out the final pieces of a budget package for the year that starts today.

The board's budget committee was scheduled to vote Thursday on an amended version of Mayor Ed Lee's \$6.8 billion spending plan, but the 1 p.m. meeting was delayed for hours as supervisors and city staffers continued negotiations.

The supervisors, in consultation with the mayor, department heads, city employees unions, health and social service contractors and their advocates, were trying to forge a compromise solution that would pass muster with the city controller, who must certify that there would be money to pay for the budget plan. **Supervisor Carmen Chu**, who chairs the budget committee, was leading the negotiations, shuttling from one office to another all afternoon.

With \$25 million to \$30 million left in what had been unfunded requests by individual supervisors for specific programs and services, budget officials said they found about \$17 million for those programs. About \$5 million is from higher-than-expected sales tax revenue and the rest from savings whittled from city departments by the committee and its budget analyst, Harvey Rose, over the past couple of weeks.

The late negotiations were hinging on whether additional revenue could be identified, whether the requests could be pared back, or a combination of the two.

"We're close, but not there yet," Chu said mid-afternoon, as she was going into another meeting Thursday.

The chief sticking point has been over the mayor's plan to contract out security services for San Francisco General and Laguna Honda hospitals.

The proposal, which would save the Department of Public Health an estimated \$2 million in the new budget cycle, is bitterly opposed by the largest city employees union, Service Employees International Union, Local 1021, which represents some of the current security officers at the two public hospitals.

Supervisors were working to find \$5 million in the budget for a police academy class next year, which would train 50 new officers. Police Chief Greg Suhr said at least three new academy classes would be needed in the coming year to keep pace with the anticipated retirements, but the mayor's original budget put aside no money for any classes.

Also unresolved was whether there would be enough money to provide a third full-time aide for each of the 11 supervisors. That would cost a little more than \$1 million a year.

Officials close to the talks said it looked as though many, if not most, of the contested cuts proposed for health and social service programs would be reversed.

The full board usually adopts the budget committee's recommendation with few if any changes. The first vote at the board is scheduled for July 19, with final approval set for the week after.

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