

City to drop to four-day work week

Garbage, emergency services will continue to operate on Fridays

Budget (City Council)

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SANTA CRUZ — Most city offices will only be open four days a week beginning Monday after most employees agreed to a reduced work week Thursday in a move that should save Santa Cruz about \$4 million.

“Hopefully it will be enough to sustain us for another year without more layoffs or significant reductions,” City Manager Dick Wilson said. “It’s pretty amazing that all of our employees are willing to do that.”

Most city offices will be open

BUDGET

Continued from A1

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday as city workers change from five, eight-hour days to four, nine-hour days — a 36-hour work week.

Next week, the city will be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, as workers take off Thursday to mark the July 4 holiday.

Santa Cruz police and firefighters will cut two hours out of their work week, Wilson said, and make up the rest of the savings through other benefit concessions.

Assistant City Manager Martin Bernal said garbage still will be collected on Fridays and emergency repairs, like broken water lines or other maintenance, will continue to be fixed any day of the week.

Santa Cruz is the second city in the county to move to a four-day work week, after Watsonville approved

a similar schedule earlier this week to balance its budget. The concessions will help Santa Cruz deal with a more than \$9 million deficit in its \$80 million general fund.

Already, the city planned to slash funding for nonprofits by 30 percent and drop funding for the Teen Center next month, on top of other major concessions made last December. Then,

DOING CITY BUSINESS

■ Beginning Monday, most Santa Cruz offices will be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Next week only, offices will open Monday through Wednesday and close Thursday and Friday to mark the July 4 holiday.

■ Trash and recycling collection schedules will not change.

■ Dimeo Lane Resource Recovery Facility will continue existing open hours, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

■ Only emergency water service will be available on Fridays. Call an operator at 420-5220.

■ Santa Cruz Municipal Utilities will not open or close accounts or accept payments on Fridays. Payments accepted after 4 p.m. Thursday will be posted the following Monday. Customers can leave payments in the drop box outside the Water Department office at 212 Locust St., Santa Cruz.

all city employees agreed to forfeit cost of living and merit raises for 2009. Earlier this year all managers agreed to 10 percent pay cuts as well, with Wilson cutting his own salary by 15 percent.

This week, all members of the city unions agreed to the reduced hours and other compensation cuts to eliminate another 10 percent from their own salaries.

“This is what the workers felt they could do,” John Gilbert, president of the city chapter of Service Employees International Union Local 521. “Obviously, we wanted to save some people’s jobs and keep services working.”

Meanwhile, Gilbert said, staff is scrambling to reschedule shift workers and figure out hours to cover things like wastewater treatment and emergency maintenance, which can’t take a day off.

“You can’t just tell people not to flush the toilet on Fridays,” Gilbert said.

In addition, the City Council has asked managers with more than 15 years at the city to consider early retirement if they work in a job that can be eliminated. In exchange, Santa Cruz would pay the workers’ health care premium for the next two years. Assuming five workers take the incentive, the city could save about \$505,325, according to city reports.