

# Supervisors' aides survive but assessor's office isn't so lucky

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SANTA CRUZ — When it comes to cutting the county budget, supervisors don't want to make themselves too much of a good example.

The liberal majority of Supervisors' Chairman Joe Cucchiara and Supervisors Gary Patton and Robley Levy Wednesday rejected attempts to cut back the time their aides work or to reduce their services and supplies budget.

But the assessor's office was not so lucky. It lost six jobs under the county's budget ax.

Supervisors managed to cut approximately \$450,000 of a \$3 million deficit during their second day of budget hearings by following County Administrative Officer George Newell's recommendations almost to the letter.

Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr. unsuccessfully tried to get the board to cut its own budget further than Newell's recommendations by reducing the five supervisory aides to four-day work weeks.

He received support only from Supervisor Dan Forbus, who then tried in vain to get the board to cut services and supplies by \$10,000. Only Moore supported him. Newell was proposing a \$4,000 cut in this area.

County Analyst Michael Van De Veer told the Sentinel Forbus had misread the budget to think there was \$10,000 that could possibly be cut.

In proposing the reduction in the aides' work week, Moore said, "We're seeing a rollback in the roll of government . . . and we as supervisors have to sing the same song that we are

asking other people to sing.

"I want to be able to go to the rest of the employees in the county and say we shared."

He suggested the aides for the third (Santa Cruz) and fourth (Pajaro Valley) districts could help out the other aides since those two districts have fewer constituents in the unincorporated areas.

But Cucchiara said it was "erroneous" to say supervisors haven't given their equal share, pointing out the supervisors' budget has gone down 14 percent since 1978.

And Levy said she couldn't support such a cutback because aides give "a very direct service that is very important and is the one road some have around the bureaucracy."

But Forbus said because of the addition of five full-time aides several years ago, "there's no department that's grown more top heavy than the Board of Supervisors in the last three to four years."

"I just don't think you need someone to write a letter thanking someone for thanking you. That's what the phone is for and it's free . . ."

In the end, in a 4-1 vote with Moore opposed, supervisors adopted Newell's recommendation to cut \$23,677 from their \$452,444 budget.

Moore and Forbus also were outvoted in an attempt to cut 1.5 analysts' positions from the county administrative officer's budget.

"Simply, when you're reducing like this, there's not much left to analyze," Moore said in proposing the reduction in Newell's staff of four analysts.

Newell disagreed, saying his

analysts are putting in more time than ever before with the financial crisis and the unprecedented need to prepare a mid-year budget.

The county administrative office's budget was cut, as Newell recommended, by \$42,094 in a 4-1 vote with Moore against. The cut didn't include any reductions in positions.

Controversy also arose over the position cuts proposed by Newell in the agricultural commissioner's and the assessor's budgets.

Moore and Forbus tried in vain to retain an agricultural biologist recommended to be cut from the agricultural commissioner's budget.

And despite Assessor Robert Petersen's contention he wouldn't be able to meet the legal deadline of completing the 1983-84 tax roll by July 1 with the recommended cut of nearly six positions, the liberal board majority supported the cuts.

Due to this incomplete tax roll, approximately \$600,000 in taxes won't be collected. This will reduce the county's 1983-84 general fund by approximately \$160,000, Petersen claimed.

Petersen also said special districts and cities also will suffer reductions in revenues due to the incomplete roll.

In reaction to Forbus' move to retain the positions, Patton said, "The conservative members of the board certainly have the soft touch. I don't see how we can do that . . ."

"We're going broke folks. Let's get off the fantasy machine like they're talking about in the state government. We don't have the money to pay for this stuff."

## Here is what county supervisors cut:

SANTA CRUZ — With more budget cuts expected today and Friday, county supervisors took the following actions Wednesday to eliminate approximately \$450,000 of the \$3 million deficit:

•Reduced the agricultural commissioner's \$365,617 budget by \$22,501, with Supervisors E. Wayne Moore Jr. and Dan Forbus voting against a proposal to eliminate an agricultural biologist.

•Unanimously approved a \$10,292 cut in Medfly early detection, a \$65,153 cut in Medfly eradication, and a \$2,328 cut in the Weights and Measures Department. Three positions were cut from Medfly eradication since the pest has been eradicated here.

•Unanimously agreed no cuts should occur in the \$262,073 animal control budget so that the county can meet its contractual and legal obligations.

•Approved a \$106,400 cut in the assessor's \$1.4 million budget, includ-

ing a cut of nearly six positions. Moore and Forbus were opposed.

•Unanimously approved a cut of \$87,261 from the auditor-controller's \$1.4 million budget, including a hiring freeze on one vacant position.

•Approved a \$23,677 cut in the supervisors' \$452,444 budget, with Moore opposed because he wanted further cuts. No positions were eliminated.

•Approved a \$42,094 cut in the county administrative office's \$528,356 budget. Moore was opposed because he wanted additional cuts. No positions were cut.

•The commission coordinator's \$24,000 budget was eliminated in a unanimous vote since this position never has been filled.

•Unanimously approved a \$755 cut in the affirmative action office's \$37,310 budget and requested a report in June on how costs could be cut through cooperation with the Personnel Department.

•The clerk of the board's \$181,073 budget was cut by \$9,194. Supervisor Robley Levy was opposed because she didn't want to charge the media for agenda packets and wanted legal ads to be divided between the two major newspapers in the area and not placed in the least expensive publication.

•Unanimously approved an \$11,423 cut in the emergency services \$60,132 budget, including the reduction of a half-time position.

•Unanimously approved a \$7,057 cut in the general elections' \$479,770 budget. No positions were cut.

Unanimously approved a \$7,399 cut in the recorder's \$238,914 budget. No positions were cut.

•Unanimously approved a \$34,098 cut in the county counsel's \$441,127 budget, including the elimination of a vacant position.

•Unanimously approved a \$392 cut in the county trapper's \$21,522 budget.