

*Sentinel*

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# County Accepts 'Unacceptable' Budget Proposal

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Supervisors called the proposed 1982-83 county budget "unusual," "unacceptable," "grim" and a "fair approach" this morning in giving the \$111.9 million document their tentative approval.

In a 4-0 vote, with Supervisor Dan Forbus absent, the board accepted the budget proposed by Acting County Administrative Office George Newell and directed public hearings to begin June 16. The final budget won't be adopted until after a series of public hearings.

Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr. said the budget is "unusual" because it calls for a reduction of almost 188 county employees and large cuts in county services.

While Moore said he supports across-the-board cuts, he stressed he wants to maintain services — such as police and fire protection — that are paid for by property taxes.

Moore added that he is "prepared to go to the people" for a vote if citizens want services maintained.

Under Proposition 13, any increase in taxes to maintain county services would have to be approved by a two-thirds majority of voters.

It's the proposed drop in county services to the public that caused Supervisor Gary Patton to call the budget proposal "unacceptable."

He complimented those who put the budget together for their courage "because what they are presenting to us in many ways is unacceptable."

It's unacceptable, Patton said, because it calls for a decrease in law enforcement when crime is increasing and for cutbacks in social services when many are unemployed and need these services.

"It's not acceptable," Patton said, "... but it's the best we can do."

Patton also suggested going to the electorate for more funds.

"The grim diagnosis this budget presents us is a future inability of the county to provide services the public has depended on," Supervisor Joe Cucchiara said.

Supervisors' Chairman Robley Levy complimented Newell and staff for their "fair approach" in recommending budget cuts and warned that cuts may be even more drastic than what is recommended.

"I'm concerned that what we have before us is the first cut in county services and the second cut may come in September," she said.