

LAYOFFS LIKELY AS CAMDEN, PA FACES BUDGET CRISIS



Camden, Pennsylvania's Mayor Dana L. Redd rolled out her budget proposal to Camden's City Council on Tuesday. Redd's budget calls for slashing all city departments funds a quarter, which will likely create a slew of layoffs in the city. "The fact of the matter is that no matter what anyone might think, the fiscal crisis in Camden is real and not contrived. But make no mistake," Redd said. "I want to reassure our residents that even during these difficult times, public safety remains my top priority." As the budget remains to be finalized, Redd did not give a number on how many jobs would be lost. Fraternal Order of Police president for Camden's rank-and-file officers, John Williamson said, "We're going to work with the mayor to preserve jobs." However, with cuts of \$14 million to the Police Department and \$7.5 million to the Fire Department, it would be virtually impossible to prevent layoffs. Police Chief Scott Thomson says that the Police Department could not withstand losing even one officer. "We have a top-flight command staff," said Thomson. "We have extremely dedicated men and women in blue. For decades, we have done more with less, and will continue to do so." Thomson plans on working with the mayor to reorganize the department and meet with labor officials to consider possible wage reductions and concessions in order to prevent layoffs.

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