

LANCASTER LAYSOFF 9 PARKS EMPLOYEES



The city of Lancaster is laying off. Nine of the cities parks and recreation department employees are being let go due to issues with slow collection of income tax. This may not sound like a high number of staffers, but with only 15 employees left this actually represents a fair percentage of the overall staff for the parks and recreation department of the city. The nine layoffs will include two full-time staff members and seven part-time employees. The pink slips went out this week, but the layoffs will actual begin on Oct. 28, giving employees little time to find new positions or make plans for the future. Mitch Overton, the parks and recreation superintendent, has asked that ,in addition to the layoffs, that the Lancaster City Council take \$60,000 that had been set aside to help pay down debts and put it towards the parks and recreation departments operating expenses. At this time the likelihood of the success of that proposal is not known. A great deal is dependant on the number of other uses that money could be put towards, other departments petitioning for the funds and the overall priorities of the Lancaster City Council. All of this is designed to help the department cope with the \$150,000 that it needs to save by the end of this fiscal year. The city parks must be able to cut enough out of their budget in order to pay for their payroll, and payments to retired employees in January of 2012. The hole in the budget was created by an expected gap in income tax collections of roughly \$86,000 for this department. The overall collections of the cities income tax of 1.75 percent are behind by roughly \$500,000 for this calendar year, though this number may continue to climb if the collections remain behind schedule. When the parks and recreation department began the year they expected to receive about \$1.4 million in funding from income taxes. Between January and the end of the month of September they were only ale to collect about \$992,000. In order to make up the shortfall by the end of the year they would need to collect roughly 400,000 in the last four months of the year. Since this totals about one third of the projected revenue and spans the holiday season this is unlikely to happen. Current projections for the revenue show that only about \$314,000 of that money is actually expected to come in. The parks and recreation department receives about 0.15 percentage points, or 8.6 percent of all income tax collections made by the city. Currently, the department has a \$1.9 million budget that requires then to not only care for the towns parks, but also the Olivedale Senior Center, which services the social needs of the towns older population. Since the remainder of the parks and recreation department's monies come from fees for programs and donations the department cannot exceed its funds available in any single year. It is a cash based department.

<https://blog.granted.com/>