

## ALLEN PARK, MICHIGAN TO LAYOFF CITY WORKERS



The people in the city of Allen Park, Michigan, are getting ready to brace for a round of layoffs as the city gets ready to issue dozens of pink slips to its workers. Their fate hung with an often fickle and unpredictable group: the voters. John Zech, the Interim City Administrator for Allen Park, has to give workers at least 30 days of notice prior to a layoff going into effect. These layoffs, which are a part of the cities deficit reduction plan which was approved in October, will lay off workers in the following areas: - 18 workers in the police department. (At this time no word was given as to whether or not these planned layoff of workers would affect the officers themselves or simply reduce the amount of support staff in the police offices.) - 9 firefighters. - No less than 12, but no more than 15 other city workers. Currently the city is not naming which city offices, or which positions, would be likely to be cut. Given that they have only provided a generic range the odds are good that the decision simply has not been made at this time about which positions would be cut. Mr. Zech explained the loss of revenue to a local reporter in the following terms, "Basically, because of the decline in property values throughout southeastern Michigan, the typical home in Allen Park has lost about 26 percent of its value in the last three years." By now, you are probably wondering how the voters play a role in all of this. Two proposals are currently on the ballot for the November 8th election that can help to change the finances for the city of Allen Park and allow the workers to keep their jobs. The first proposal, should the voters allow it to pass, will give the city the right to levy roughly 3.5 million dollars over the next five years in order to add more funds to the budgets for the cities fire and police departments. If this proposal makes it past the voters than the layoffs do not need to happen at all and the existing staff who received layoff notices can simply disregard them and continue at work as if nothing had even happened. The second proposal is related not so much to the cities employee costs, but to cutting down the amount of taxes that the average resident will pay in order to fund those services. This proposal would allow the city to levy as many of the mills as they need to in order to raise funds. The funds would then be used to make payments on a bond for the Allen Park Studio Center, a property owned by the city. In this case the millage would not expire until the debt was completely paid off. That would decrease the amount of taxes residents need to pay. As Mr. Zech summed it up for a local reporter, "If both pass, it would cost the average homeowner in Allen Park an additional \$350 a year in taxes."

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