

LUZERNE COUNTY UPS NUMBERS OF LAYOFFS NEEDED



Earlier this month we took a look at what was hopefully going to be good news for the workers of Luzerne County as the county was looking at cutting back on the number of layoffs that they provided. For those of you who missed out on our earlier coverage here is an [excerpt](#) "...The county of Luzerne was planning to layoff about 106 workers in order to balance their budgets. After a meeting this week a serious cut was made to this number of jobs being released. The council now has decided only to cut 56 workers. The layoffs are changing because the council approved a two percent tax increase. The measures were not approved by a unanimous vote. Some of the member of the council voted against the tax increase, which will be an increase of about \$10.50 for a property that is currently valued at \$100,000." Now, it looks like as we get closer to the Feb 15th deadline, when the budget must be approved or the jobs have to be cut, things are taking a turn for the worse for the workers in Luzerne County as a higher number of job cuts are being talked about in order to make ends meet. In addition the county may also have to give it residents another tax increase in order to make ends meet. The numbers, which were looking to go as low as 56 layoffs now seem to have settled at about 70 jobs lost and while this is still lower than the initial estimate for more than 100 jobs being cut it is still a significant increase. This number of cuts will include revenues found by approving the tax increase of about two percent for every county resident. This tax increase will still not be enough money to cover the amount of money that the county will need to pay its estimated obligations through the end of the 2013 fiscal year. While there was some talk in favor raising the taxes even further, to just under four percent, this plan was not accepted, since you cannot use a source of recurring revenue in order to pay for workers salaries. The enhanced tax increase was cut down and proponents of the fewer layoffs camp will have to find one-time sources of income to pay for the jobs if they are serious about keeping them. The problem is that the sources are scarce. On the bright side not all of the jobs lost will be in the form of direct layoffs. The county is planning to cut back on about 50 members of the staff who are currently employed. After that the remaining 23 positions will be cut by attrition, which means that while no filled positions will be cut, unfilled positions will no longer be available either. The council hopes to reduce costs by making things more efficient, and an interim manager was recently brought in for that express purpose. Hopes that he would be able to save the jobs on such short notice however are not looking to be realistic.

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