

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY WORKING TO AVOID 700 COUNTY EMPLOYEE JOB CUTS



Miami-Dade County is working to save 700 government jobs across the county, according to The Miami Herald. The county is considering pulling money from the fire department to lessen cuts at libraries.

The draft budget proposal was submitted by Mayor Carlos Gimenez and it was submitted on Wednesday at a finance hearing in front of county commissioners. The votes of the commissioners are needed to approve taxes and fees.

JL Demps Jr., the president of the Greater Goulds Optimist Club, said the following to commissioners: "We've been asked to do more with less each year." County grants totaling \$65,000 were awarded to the Goulds group this year from a \$20 million program Gimenez is looking to cut by 10 percent.

"We ask that you have a heart," Demps said.

Kristian Chima, 24, was one person who spoke in front of the commissioners. Chima spoke on the behalf of Best Buddies, which was awarded \$100,000 from Miami-Dade.

"There was a time in high school when I didn't have any friends, and was scared to speak in front of people," Chima said. "All of that changed thanks to Best Buddies."

Libraries are in danger of losing the most jobs, with special property tax funds generating just \$30 million of the \$50 million libraries are prepared to spend this year. Cash reserves to cover the difference will be spent by October 1, when the new budget year starts.

Gimenez will unveil his complete budget plan next month. Advocates for the libraries want the commissioners to ignore the budget proposed by Gimenez and raise library taxes in an effort to generate \$64 million to save jobs.

Terry Murphy is a union consultant for libraries. Murphy urged the commissioners to increase property taxes instead of relying on real estate values growing. "We're not allowing ourselves to make the hard decisions on millage rates," he said. "Allowing the property appraiser to determine the service levels of this community is putting everyone at risk."

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