

San Francisco approves city budget

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SAN FRANCISCO -- The San Francisco Board of Supervisors' budget committee passed a \$6.83 billion city budget early this morning that includes funding for a police academy class and maintains sheriff's department security at local hospitals.

The budget approved unanimously by the committee included more than \$17 million in adjustments, including roughly \$3.1 million in funding restorations for public health, \$2.5 million for human services and \$2.32 million for the Department of Children, Youth and Families, according to Supervisor Carmen Chu, the committee's chairwoman.

The additional funding came from increased sales tax revenue and \$14 million in additional savings from city departments identified by the committee, Chu said.

The budget added funding for a police academy class in response to concerns about the need to replace retiring officers.

The budget approved by the committee today also maintained funding for the San Francisco Sheriff's Department to provide security at San Francisco General Hospital and Laguna Honda Hospital.

The budget proposed by Mayor Ed Lee had called for security at Laguna Honda, currently handled by the sheriff's department, to be contracted out to a private company. The move could save around \$4 million, according to the city controller's office, but was opposed by labor groups.

City law allows the city to contract with private companies if they can provide services at a lower cost than similar work by public employees. However, the committee continued a vote on a finding to that effect to allow time for further talks with labor groups.

"Given the budgetary challenges we face I think we do have to figure out where we might find additional savings," said Supervisor David Chiu.

The budget also restores half of a proposed \$600,000 cut to street tree maintenance and adds funding to the Office of Small Business, Chu said. In addition, it maintains around \$15 million in reserves.

The budget will now be voted on by the full board on July 19.

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