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SIOUX CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS DECIDED TO WAIT BEFORE VOTING ON PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS THURSDAY NIGHT THAT COULD RESULT IN THE ELIMINATION OF FOUR POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT POSITIONS.

THOSE DEPARTMENTS MAKE UP 71% OF THE CITY'S BUDGET.

EACH DEPARTMENT IN THE CITY HAS BEEN ASKED TO CUT WHERE THEY CAN TO HELP REDUCE A LIKELY PROPERTY TAX INCREASE. POLICE CHIEF DOUG YOUNG HAS PROPOSED ELIMINATING A STREET LEVEL DRUG UNIT COMPRISED OF A SERGEANT AND TWO OFFICERS.

THE CHIEF SAID THOSE DUTIES WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO REGULAR BEAT PATROL OFFICERS, AND THAT NEIGHBORHOOD PATROL STAFFING IN THE NINE CITY DISTRICTS WOULD NOT BE REDUCED.

THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OFFICER'S POSITION WITH THE SIOUX CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO A PROPOSED CUT.

CHIEF TOM EVERETT AND SIX CITIZENS SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF SAVING THE POSITION.

EVERETT TOLD COUNCIL MEMBERS THAT HIS DEPARTMENT IS AT A BUDGET-PERSONNEL TIPPING POINT. HE STATED HE COULD NOT REDUCE THE LINE FIREFIGHTERS WITHOUT CLOSING A STATION.

NONE OF THE AFFECTED OFFICERS IN EITHER DEPARTMENT WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS, BUT WOULD BE REASSIGNED TO OTHER DUTIES.. THE POSITIONS WOULD BE ELIMINATED THROUGH ATTRITION.

MAYOR BOB SCOTT SAID TO HAVE A CUT IN PUBLIC SAFETY JOBS WAS NOT AN EASY DECISION AND THAT IT WAS A DIFFICULT TIME FOR THE CITY.

COUNCIL MEMBER RHONDA CAPRON SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF FINDING A WAY TO KEEP ALL POSITIONS.

IN THE END, SCOTT ASKED COUNCIL MEMBERS TO WAIT ON A FINAL DECISION FOR ABOUT A WEEK UNTIL THE FINAL DAY OF BUDGET HEARINGS.

BOTH CHIEFS WILL LOOK TO SEE IF OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS LIKE GRANTS OR FEES ARE POSSIBLE TO HELP SAVE THE AFFECTED POSITIONS.