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Cincinnati City Council still won't lay off cops

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It doesn't appear that Cincinnati will lay off police officers this fall - City Council still won't agree to do it.

City Manager Milton Dohoney proposed laying off 44 officers now as a way to save their full salaries all of next year. The city faces a \$33 million deficit and Dohoney wanted to get a head start on that by making cuts before 2012 budget discussions start in November.

But at least five council members - Charterite Chris Bortz and Republicans Charlie Winburn, Leslie Ghiz, Wayne Lippert and Amy Murray - will not vote for any package that includes police layoffs.

Council's Budget and Finance Committee was scheduled to meet Monday morning to vote on the proposed cuts. But Chairwoman Roxanne Qualls announced Sunday night the meeting was canceled "because there is not a majority of City Council members who support the recommendations."

The public can still weigh in on the budget at a 6 p.m. public hearing at the Metropolitan Sewer District administration building.

"There's no emergency need to start laying off cops," Bortz said. "We have a few months to work through a solution for solving the budget crisis of 2012."

Councilwoman Laure Quinlivan calls their plan to wait short-sighted.

"This was a step to get us in fiscal shape," she said. "It's disappointing that my colleagues don't have the guts to make the cuts."

All nine are running for election Nov. 8 with competition from 12 challengers.

Many of the items in Dohoney's \$5.1 million savings plan are actually things the city has saved money on rather than cuts, such as keeping positions vacant. About \$2.9 million of the total are temporary cuts that won't help cut the budget next year. Even if council agrees to the package he proposed, a projected deficit of \$25 million would still remain for 2012.

Meg Olberding, Dohoney's spokeswoman, said she couldn't yet say what the administration might do if council again rejects the main proposed money-saver.

"We've laid out what we think should happen," she said. "Once they take a vote, we'll have to act accordingly."
