



**Onondaga County Employees**

**UNION INFO  
IBLAST**

Thursday, February 25, 2009

**UNION NEWS UPDATE:**

**County Exec. Mahoney forecasts next year's budget gap**

Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney today held a very brief meeting with union leaders and representatives, along with County Commissioners, to discuss the coming budget process and the anticipated shortfall the County faces.

Present on behalf of CSEA were Local 834 President Phil Graham, CSEA Labor Relations Specialists Rick Britton and Marc Heatley, and all of our Unit Presidents, with the exception of the DOT Unit President, who was out plowing.

Mahoney said that her forecast for the budget shortfall for 2011 is currently estimated at \$55 million dollars. She said that in response to criticism that she started her budget planning too late last year, she is starting earlier this time around.

She indicated that renegotiating the sales tax sharing formula would have a big impact on the budget shortfall, but not enough to make up for it. She said that there will be job cuts, more than last year, and cuts to services, possibly whole departments. She came up with a projection of up to 300 layoffs, but never said how she arrived at that figure, or who would be impacted.

She did mention that there would be no attempt to reduce hours for workers like she proposed last time and failed. She did take the opportunity to bash CSEA, noting that we were unwilling to re-open our contract, and claiming that we never offered any concessions, which is untrue... We offered concessions, but they weren't the concessions she wanted. She went on to blame our health insurance and pension costs as causing part of the shortfall.

As soon as she was done speaking, the County Executive abruptly left the meeting, leaving no opportunity for any conversation or exchange of ideas. The original intent of the meeting, according to her invitation, was to share cost-saving ideas, and we're concerned about why that didn't occur. Instead, she only put forth a worst case scenario, and her plan to cut services and workers, without offering any alternatives.

Your CSEA leadership urges you to remain calm in the face of this troubling news. We have no idea yet what any of this means, but we will certainly be mounting a strategic campaign to fight back against job and service cuts, and we will need your support to help us as we move forward.

In the meantime, CSEA is still willing to be an active partner with the County in finding solutions that do not balance budget shortfalls on the workers. We have requested a list of the suggestions that the County has collected through their suggestion program to review possible savings, and **we are asking all our members to come up with their own cost-cutting ideas and suggestions.** If you have not already shared your cost-saving ideas with your Unit President, please do so immediately. Some of our members have already given some great ideas, and we will be holding a meeting next Tuesday with our Unit Presidents to review these suggestions, with the intent of sharing them with the County in the hopes of avoiding harsh cuts.

Remember, our union contract is still in effect through 2012, and is legally binding upon both parties.

We will keep you informed as we move ahead in budget discussions, and we urge you, if you haven't already, to sign up for our e-mail list at [www.csea834.com](http://www.csea834.com)

