

Montgomery County to lay off 23 employees from original pool of 237

Some employees took retirement incentives, others filled available jobs

by Erin Cunningham | Staff Writer

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Of the 237 Montgomery County employees whose jobs are being eliminated for fiscal 2011, which begins Thursday, most took other positions within county government.

Twenty-three employees — 10 of whom work for the county's libraries — are expected to be without work, according to data provided by county spokeswoman Donna Bigler.

The county's \$3.4 billion fiscal 2011 budget calls for 446 positions to be abolished, 237 of which were filled. The other 209 positions were vacant.

The county employs about 9,000 full- and part-time employees. This does not include employees from the county's park and planning department, Montgomery College or Montgomery County Public Schools, which made their own decisions regarding layoffs and furloughs.

Of the county government's employees who were to be laid off, 64 accepted a retirement incentive — a one-time payout of \$30,000 and other benefits.

About 150 employees applied for and were hired for other county government jobs, Bigler said.

Of the 23 employees who will lose their jobs in county government Thursday, nine have pending offers and eight did not apply for available positions in the county, she said. Another eight have not found new jobs.

The county's Department of Public Libraries was among the hardest hit agencies, with 22 layoffs.

At the county's planning department, about 47 positions were eliminated — 24 of which were vacant, according to spokeswoman Valerie Berton. The number of layoffs is not yet known, but she says it will be in the mid-teens.

Those employees will be paid through Sept. 1, but will not be required to work, she said.

The planning department's budget fell from \$18.5 million in fiscal 2010 to \$15.9 million in fiscal 2011, creating the need for layoffs and furloughs, Berton said.

The planning department receives funding from the county, but like Montgomery College and Montgomery County Public Schools, it makes its own spending decisions.

Planning department employees will take 10 unpaid days of leave in fiscal 2010, the most of any county employees. Employees will take off one week in December and one in August, Berton said. In both cases, the planning department's building will be closed so that money can be saved from heating and cooling the building, she said.

Montgomery County Public Schools will lay off as many as 25 employees, many of them teachers, said spokesman Dana Tofig.

With additional retirements expected over the summer, Tofig said it's possible the school system could avoid layoffs by placing those employees in vacated positions.

Montgomery College is not laying off employees but has agreed to furlough employees, according to spokesman Brett Eaton. Administrators will take eight days of unpaid leave, and full-time faculty will take three, he said. Other staff will take four furlough days.

About two dozen county parks department employees could be laid off, according to spokeswoman Kelli Holsendolph. About 43 have taken a retirement incentive.

-446 positions were abolished:

-237 had been filled

-209 had been vacant

Of the positions that had been filled:

-23 employees are scheduled to be laid off in fiscal 2011

-64 employees took a retirement incentive

-150 employees took other jobs in county government

Other numbers:

-1 employee making \$100,000 or more was laid off

-11 employees making \$25,001 to \$50,000 were laid off

-21 laid off employees belong to MCGEO (United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994/Municipal and County Government Employees Organization)

Source: Montgomery County