

Chicago Federation of Labor serves up \$272 million in cost-cutting options to avert layoffs

If Mayor Lori Lightfoot implements the suggestions, CFL President Bob Reiter said there would be no need for 350 union layoffs that diminish “desperately needed” city services.

By Fran Spielman | Nov 10, 2020, 5:14pm EST



Chicago City Hall. | Sun-Times file

In 2011, the CFL asked Pennsylvania-based Public Works to find alternatives to then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s ultimatum that organized labor choose between work-rule changes and 625 layoffs.

Their report suggested ways to cut the city budget by \$242 million, largely by eliminating redundant layers of middle management, improving efficiency and having city employees do work that was being doled out to politically connected contractors.

Now the same firm has a proposal that could save at least \$195 million and as much as \$272 million.

All the ideas represent “recurring, long-term structural improvements,” though some are only “partial-year savings to allow realistic time for implementation.”

The report focuses exclusively on “efficiency gains” and not “additional revenue sources.” Those could come later.

“Rather than further borrowing, we believe that city taxpayers could be well-served in the long-run by additional short-term revenues,” the report states.

“These could total another tranche of budget solutions of equal magnitude to those presented here. Taken together, we believe significant opportunities remain ... to close the city’s structural budget deficit and obviate the need for continued borrowing.”