

the budget deficit is approaching \$10 billion and the prime options remaining are to cut staff and slow the growth of employee compensation.

The Chief-Leader/Andrew Hinderaker

Called For Pay Freeze

Mr. Cuomo's plan to deal with the state's financial problems, laid out in great detail on his campaign website, calls for a one-year freeze on publicemployee salaries, a freeze on state taxes, and caps on both state spending and local property taxes. The property-tax cap, along with expected declines in aid to local school districts, could affect jobs, pay and benefits for Teachers and school administrators.

The effect could be alleviated somewhat by Mr. Cuomo's call for reducing unfunded state mandates, which require spending by districts that is not reimbursed by the state. He also wants broad authority to reorganize and streamline government agencies, and he is urging local government units to merge to cut costs. Contracts with the state public-employee unions run out April 1, 2011.

"Every Governor says he doesn't have enough money," Mr. Cox said. "We're hopeful that we can work out an agreement. It may happen in six months, it may happen in a year."

Barbara Zaron, president of the New York State Organization of Management/ Confidential Employees, said her members are "ready, willing and able" to sit down with Mr. Cuomo on government reorganization issues. "We offer our members' experience." Many OMCE members are veterans who have worked under different policies and can advise him about "what works, what doesn't work, how to restructure," she said.

OMCE's goal, she said, is "hurting the smallest number of people in the [state] workforce and the public. Our members are taxpayers, too. We're all in the same boat. We don't look at things through only one filter." OMCE is not a union like the others but an association promoting the interests of management employees.

Ms. Zaron said last week that she had yet to hear from Mr. Cuomo's staff but was drafting letters to him, incoming Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli and members of the State Legislature.

"With Election Day come and gone it's now time for a fresh start," said Richard C. Iannuzzi, president of New York State United Teachers. He said he was taking Mr. Cuomo at his word that "he wants people to roll up their sleeves and talk about shared sacrifice."

Can't Rule Out Tax Hikes

He said "everything has to be on the table," including possible increases in state income taxes for wealthier residents.

"We have to demonstrate a real commitment to education through the university level that will create the skilled workforce that will turn the state's economy around," he said, adding that squeezing education spending "will slow down the recovery, not speed it up."

Mr. Nespoli said he hoped Mr. Cuomo would work with the unions the way his father, Mario, did as Governor from 1983 to 1994. "His father always had an ear and his door was always open," Mr. Nespoli said.

"We're liable to disagree but at least let's get together and discuss the issues," he said. "If you're not going to try to work with the unions, things can get really out of hand."

Frustration with Paterson

Ms. Zaron said she hoped OMCE's efforts with Mr. Cuomo would be more fruitful than they have been with the current Governor, David A. Paterson. She said the association's members met regularly with Mr. Paterson's representatives for the past year and a half "in serious discussions about budget cuts. . . that would save money and give some stability to state government [by] avoiding layoffs."

But she said OMCE's suggestions were generally ignored; in fact, she said, only a few proposals that came from several sources were accepted. "They would say the situation has gotten worse," she said, explaining the response from Mr. Paterson's people. "It left the question of how serious the administration was."

Some of the union leaders expressed delight that Mr. DiNapoli was elected Comptroller. He was appointed to the post by the State Legislature after his predecessor, Alan Hevesi, resigned in disgrace after pleading guilty to a felony for having state workers chauffeur his ailing wife. Mr. DiNapoli, whose father was a shop steward of the telephone company, had strong support from unions, both public- and private-sector, and many commentators believed the labor vote put him over the top in a close race against Republican Harry Wilson.



BARBARA ZARON: Offers help on restructuring.

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‘A Friend to Labor’

“I think the union had a very big part in the victory,” Mr. Nespoli said. “Some of the candidates were totally on the other side and wanted to take away union benefits. . . DiNapoli feels pensions are important.”

“Our members worked hard in the election,” said Mr. Fox. “He’s always been a friend not just to labor but to everybody. We feel safe with him.”

“The race that mattered the most was Tom DiNapoli,” Mr. Madarasz said. “We pulled out all the stops we could. It shows the power of people dedicated to the cause.”



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