



Inclusion Through Diversity

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Sheriff's Budget Among Requests Examined in Latest Budget Review**

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee considered six more proposed budgets, as they continued their review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2016 County budget.

Under review tonight were budgets for the Sheriff's Office, Probation and Community Justice, the Office of Human Rights, the Airport, Solid Waste Management Division, and Tompkins Community Action. (The Airport and Solid Waste are the County's two enterprise units, which are not supported by tax dollars.)

Highlights from tonight's presentations:

For the Sheriff's Office and Jail, Sheriff Ken Lansing submitted nine over-target requests, several of them focused on overtime expense and equipment, as well as vehicles on the Road Patrol side. The Administrator did not recommend a requested overtime adjustment of more than \$193,000 for the Road Patrol, Administrator Mareane telling Legislators that, in terms of five-year trends, the budgeted amount (without the requested increase) appears attainable. He did, however, partially support an over-target increase in the overtime budget on the Corrections side, saying trends show more money is needed to provide a budget that is achievable. The budget recommends \$140,000 of the nearly \$350,000 requested.

The Sheriff requested \$78,000 to cover the increase in inmate board-out costs, of which \$8,800 was recommended. Sheriff Lansing said the seven extra jail beds are still being built, in the renovation scheduled for completion by year's end, and should have some impact. He said medical aspects have become a real issue for Corrections, related to some difficult issues, which include mental illness and addiction.

For vehicles, the Recommended Budget includes a requested \$36,000 for two vehicles for the Criminal Investigation Division and \$120,000, of about \$212,000 requested, for patrol vehicle replacement—Administrator Mareane said that amount, in addition to target funding, will replace four to five vehicles. The Sheriff noted that as part of patrol vehicle replacement all computer and other equipment associated with the vehicle is replaced, as well.

Solid Waste Manager Barbara Eckstrom said this year has been a year of great program success and some serious budget challenges, and the division is maintaining a very conservative fiscal posture in 2016. The Solid Waste budget calls for the annual Solid Waste Fee to return to \$56 per household rate in 2016, a \$4 increase from the current year, which Eckstrom said is necessary, along with reduced spending, to address a \$350,000 loss in recycling revenues anticipated in 2015, while maintaining a 10% fund balance. Eckstrom said additional food scrap drop spots and public space recycling will be added in 2016.

For the Airport, the Administrator's budget for a second year continues to waive \$126,000 in administrative fees the Airport pays the County for services provided the Airport. Airport Manager Mike Hall told Legislators the losses for airline service, down 25% since 2012, have now plateaued, but with high load factors, and that the Airport continues to seek new hubs to address poor service reliability in the Northeast corridor. Customer loyalty is a major focus for the Airport, he said.

Probation Director Pat Buechel told Legislators future unknowns for her department include the outcome of New York State "raise-the-age" legislation, which would raise the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18. She said it's likely the law would result in all 16- and 17-year-olds being issued a JD appearance ticket requiring an appearance at Probation for possible Diversion Services; there could also be a future impact on staffing should caseload expand from a restructured Ithaca Community Treatment Court.

With its combined mission of healing, celebration, and dialogue; civil rights enforcement; human rights education; and fostering a grassroots/institutional safety net, the Office of Human Rights, Director Karen Baer told Legislators, balances its activities between enforcement and education, with the goal of making those impacts countywide. As part of its budget request, the Office requested \$8,750 in one-time funds (the same as unexpended funds in the current year budget) to enable staff to attend professional training/conferences, as the Office seeks to build and reestablish relations with state and federal agencies. The Administrator recommended ongoing funding at a reduced level of \$2,900.

Tompkins Community Action Director Lee Dillon thanked the County for its support and its ongoing successful collaboration with the agency. She reported, in part, that through 19 programs and 105 staff, TCA served more than 6,500 individuals in more than 2,300 families in 2014, and that a recent independent audit show 92% of all TCA funding goes directly into program activities.

The Expanded Budget Committee will next convene Monday, September 28. All Expanded Budget sessions begin at 5:30 p.m., and are held at Legislature Chambers in the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street (Second Floor).

The 2016 Recommended Budget, and other information related to the budget process, is posted on the budget page of the County web site at [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/2016budget](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/2016budget).

*Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee, 592-3206; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.*

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