



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Legislators Near End of Presentation Stage in Budget Review**

Entering its fourth week of budget review, Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee heard from eight more departments and agencies, as they continued their review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2016 County budget.

Presented tonight were proposals from the Board of Elections, the Finance, Health, Mental Health, and Youth Services Departments, the County Attorney, the District Attorney, and Rural Library Services.

Among highlights from tonight's presentations:

A more than \$400,000 increase in local-dollar support for the Health Department's mandated PreK Special Education program is the largest single source of growth in the 2016 Recommended Budget. Public Health Director Frank Kruppa told Legislators the increased number of children served and the increased intensity of the cases in the Children With Special Needs program is a major influence for his department in the year ahead. Caseloads are rising for the program's existing Community Health Nurses, including the leadership position of Senior Community Health Nurse, which does not normally have a caseload. Among the Health Department budget requests was more than \$94,000 for an additional Community Health Nurse to help address that caseload, a request not included in the Recommended Budget.

Reporting on the Mental Health Department, Mr. Kruppa, who also serves as Interim Commissioner of Mental Health, talked of the many people served in a myriad of programs which are operating in a changing treatment and care structure. And, in response to Legislator questions, he said that, after serving for seven months in his dual role, he has no doubt that the joint approach is the direction the County should take for the long term—that having that “high-level view” of both departments is essential toward achieving synergies between the two health-related programs that will benefit this community. As part of the Mental Health budget, the County Administrator has recommended one-time funding of more than \$83,000 (out of nearly \$150,000 requested) to replace five vehicles in the department's aging fleet.

As part of the Finance Department budget, establishment of a Deputy Director of Finance is recommended, at a cost of more than \$119,000—for salary, fringes, and related expenses—to address a very lean staffing pattern in the department, including the sharing of high-level tasks with the Director. Finance Director Rick Snyder said this will assist during a time of transition of his department, which will lose five positions to retirement over the next year-and-a-half. The Recommended Budget also includes more than \$73,000 in one-time funding to enable a three-month staffing overlap for each of three top positions that will be vacated in 2016.

For the Board of Elections, \$123,000 in one-time funding is recommended, to ensure adequate

staffing for as many as four elections during next year's Presidential election year.

District Attorney Gwen Wilkinson requests more than \$41,000 to add a second, part-time Confidential Investigator to her roster, which is included in the Recommended Budget, telling Legislators that implementation of body camera protocol for officers will add significant time to handle every criminal case and create significantly more evidence for each stage of the case process. She characterized the additional Investigator as a "legitimate first start" to address this increased workload.

For the Youth Services budget, funding is recommended to preserve a full-time Program Management position—just over \$14,000 to raise target funding to half-time, with revenue from the City of Ithaca to bring the position to full-time status. \$20,000 is also recommended to replace lost funding and support the Youth Works supportive employment program through Cooperative Extension. Not recommended are a 3% cost-of-living increase requested for Youth Services agency partners, and an additional 3.3% increase for the Recreation Partnership. As part of the County Administration budget, Administrator Mareane included \$75,000 to restore some funding to the Municipal Youth Services program, but ultimately did not recommend it as part of the budget, due to changing conditions that affected capacity at the time the budget was finalized. He said that funding, however, is an appropriate issue for consideration by the Legislature.

Rural Library Services requested over-target funding of \$14,311, to begin a plan to increase staff salaries to the Living Wage, and in the case of some of the libraries, to hire additional staff. With the breadth of services provided and challenges rural libraries face, Legislators were told the 2% increase included in the budget does not meet their demand, with current funding barely more than that received in the 1980s.

The Expanded Budget Committee has its final scheduled presentation session, when it resumes its work Wednesday, September 30. 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).

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