



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **More Legislative Review of 2017 Budget Requests**

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee tonight heard seven more budget presentations in a third night of review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2017 budget.

Presenting tonight were Workforce Development; Tompkins County Area Development; the Health, Mental Health; and Personnel Departments; Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources (OAR); and Animal Control, handled through the Tompkins County SPCA.

Highlights from tonight's presentations:

OAR focused its presentation on its request for \$70,000 in over-target funding, not included in the Recommended Budget, to formalize and continue its College Initiative program, described as "a bridge program from jail or prison to college," most of its students formerly incarcerated in Tompkins County Jail and nearly all on probation or parole. Program director Benay Rubenstein reported 18 formerly incarcerated individuals are now attending college, most of them at Tompkins Cortland Community College, with 20 or more expected to apply for the spring semester, if the necessary support is available.

TC3 President Carl Haynes spoke in support of the request, calling it a "worthy investment" in people's lives, and two student participants provided moving comments to legislators on the difference the College Initiative Program has made for them. The funding would underwrite 1.5 staff positions, supplementing private funds. Rubenstein also noted that the presentation's timing was particularly appropriate, since the State University of New York has now approved "ban the box" and will no longer ask on the college admissions application whether an applicant has been convicted of a crime.

Public Health Director Frank Kruppa reported on many initiatives and program developments at the Mental Health Department, among them State licensing for the new Personalized Recovery Oriented Services approach to mental health treatment, creation of a quality assurance unit, and satellite offices in four school districts, and implementation of Vital Access Program grant funding for open access/walk-in intake for mental health services.

For the Health Department, Director Kruppa noted that State aid remains relatively stable. He said the need to address mandated services and emerging issues are behind the Health Department's request for an additional half-time sanitarian position in Environmental Health, a more than \$29,000 over-target request not included in the Administrator's budget.

Workforce Development Director Julia Mattick noted that among her department's major influences is the new federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which, in part, expands its youth program focus on an older population of out-of-school youth up to age 24. A nearly \$15,000 over-target request, not included in the recommended budget, would increase contract hours with County

Youth Services for technical assistance to further develop staff expertise in working with that older population.

Reporting on a successful year, Tompkins County Area Development identified the close collaboration between TCAD and Workforce Development as among the opportunities for continued economic development in Tompkins County, along with world-class research and development, a very strong start-up ecosystem, and a thriving downtown with \$250 million in investment over the past five years.

Personnel Commissioner Amy Guerri described her department's wide range of responsibilities and functions and, as several other departments have done at previous sessions, identified succession planning as among the department's concerns, with retirements of three key staff members anticipated over the next three years. The departments over-target requests, all recommended by the County Administrator, include a new Human Resources Associate position focusing on recruitment, to significantly increase the efforts to attract and retain a highly qualified diverse staff at a critical time when the County workforce retirements are expected to escalate.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Thursday, September 22. 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), Ithaca.

The 2017 Recommended Budget, with schedules and other budget-related information, is posted on the budget page of the County web site at [www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2017budget](http://www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2017budget).

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