



Inclusion Through Diversity

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September 29, 2016
TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget Presentations Conclude in 2017 County Budget Review

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee heard the final scheduled presentations, as they completed their first phase of reviewing County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2017 County budget.

Legislators heard presentations from the County Historian, Sheriff's Office and Jail, Tompkins Community Action, Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), Transportation Planning, the Tompkins County Public Library, and County Administration (including presentation the recommended 2017-2021 Capital Program.

Highlights from tonight's presentations:

For the Sheriff's Office and Jail, 16 over-target requests were submitted, half of them (all one-time funding) recommended as part of the administrator's budget. Among those requests not recommended are several are related to staffing: a request for two additional Corrections Officers at the Jail (over \$115,000) and two requests to increase premium pay overtime--\$106,000 for the law enforcement division and more than \$63,000 for Corrections. The overtime funding requests, as well as requested over-target spending to increase the allocation for inmate board-outs by more than \$100,000, were among those characterized by Undersheriff Brian Robison as addressing the need for "realistic budgeting" for these expenses as part of the budget, an approach recommended by Finance to avoid overruns and the need for contingent fund requests in the future.

Undersheriff Robison also noted that the two additional Correction positions are recommended especially in light of the current tenuous status of the Jail variance. "This is undoubtedly going to come up as part of the jail committee discussions," he said. "We certainly believe there is good cause for looking at increased staffing."

For TCAT, the Recommended Budget contains \$50,000 in one-time funding (as was allocated in 2016), as part of the County's \$989,522 contribution to TCAT, which includes \$869,522 from the tax levy and a projected \$120,000 in revenue from the Mortgage Recording Tax. That funding amount must be matched by the City of Ithaca and Cornell University under the TCAT partnership agreement.

Tompkins County Public Library Director Susan Currie thanked the County for its support to enable the Library to address its structural deficit, noting that this year is the first year since she became director in 2010 that the Library has not had to draw on reserves as part of the budget. She asked, however, that the Legislature reconsider a Technical Librarian position, more than \$82,000 in funding for that position not recommended in the administrator's budget. Noting that she has requested the position for the past four years, Currie observed that "it's now or never," since the position is essential to operate the Library's long-planned 21st Century Digital Technology Lab and address the community's digital. Without the position, she said, the Library "will not be able to meet the expectations of this community."

As part of the County Historian's budget, the administrator recommends \$25,000 in over-target spending to support the programming for celebration of the County's Bicentennial in 2017, the third year of a three-year installment to support the celebration.

An over-target request in the County Administration budget would allocate more than \$50,000 in one-time funding to support a performance measurement system, the first year of three years' funding. Administrator Mareane said that would fund additional licenses and internal facilitation expense to implement a Results-Based Accountability system, which has been used with success in the Youth Services Department.

Outlining the recommended Capital Program for the next five years, Administrator Mareane indicated that new initiatives in the \$29.6 million program include two new bridge projects: replacement of the Ludlowville Road Bridge in Lansing (\$1.5 million/\$300,000 local) and design for rehabilitation of Dryden's Fall Creek Road Bridge(\$95,000/\$19,000 local). It also would fund the first year of a new cash-funded Natural Infrastructure Program, a \$200,000 annual local dollar investment supporting such projects as streambank stabilization and wetlands protection to protect and enhance natural systems to mitigate the impact of severe weather events. By policy, the County earmarks a 0.5% increase in levy each year toward the capital program.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Thursday, October 6, for the first of as many as three voting meetings, to consider recommended amendments to the County Administrator's budget. 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.

On Wednesday, October 5, the Legislature will hold its Community Budget Forum, the annual public information meeting on the 2017 Recommended Budget. The Forum will take place, from 7:00-8:30 p.m., at Legislature Chambers.

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

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

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