



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Library, Youth Services, and OAR Funding Among Recommended Budget Changes**

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee have begun to recommend changes to County Administrator Joe Mareane' Recommended Budget delivered to them a month ago, marking the start of a new phase of the County's 2017 budget process.

Legislators tonight recommended the following changes to the budget. Tonight's decisions may be reconsidered at later expanded committee meetings and will require approval by the full Legislature to become final.

#### **TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:**

Legislators added back into the budget funding to support the Technology Librarian that the Library has requested, but, by a 10-4 vote, approved funding only at a half-time level, \$41,207. Legislator Dooley Kiefer stated that the Library has needed the position for the past few years, and especially needs it now with the new technology lab coming on line. Kiefer was one of several legislators who said they would be prepared to ask for reconsideration to full-time as the budget process moves on. Legislator Mike Sigler, however, said that to him adding the position doesn't make sense, noting that the Library over the past three years indicated that it would be self-sustaining after the County allocated significant funds to enable the Library to address its structural deficit. The request for this new position, he said, is not consistent with that pledge.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES, ALTERNATIVES, AND RESOURCES:**

\$70,000 in one-time funding was approved to fund OAR's College Initiative Program, on a one-year pilot basis. Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne called the program a good investment, especially for those who are in the County's Reentry Program, "to begin a fresh, new life." Several legislators had high praise for the inspiring presentation regarding the College Initiative Program, Legislator Carol Chock calling it "the single most impressive presentation" she's seen since she's been on the Legislature. Legislators had first voted on multi-year funding to support a two-year pilot, which failed by a tie vote of 7-7, then approved the one-year funding by a 12-2 margin.

#### **PLANNING:**

Three years in multi-year funding, \$50,000 each year, was approved, by an 11-3 vote, to implement the Energy "Navigator" program, a key element of recommendations of the Energy and Economic Development Task Force, to provide expert advice and guidance to assist businesses with planning, evaluating, and financing energy improvements. Commissioner Ed Marx said the "navigator", as envisioned, would be a Planning employee who would work collaboratively with people in the economic development and business sectors, saying that the Legislature would see a detailed proposal after the program was authorized.

#### **YOUTH SERVICES:**

- \$10,000 was approved as one-time funding, by an 11-3 vote, to help support the Ithaca Youth Bureau's Outing Program's Pathfinders program to bring together urban and rural youth in an outdoor setting.
- \$12,859 was approved to fund a 2% cost-of-living increase for Youth Service contract agencies, similar to the 2% increase provided to human services contract agencies as part of the administrator's budget, that funding approved by a 10-2 vote.

#### YOUTH SERVICES RECREATION PARTNERSHIP:

\$2,561 in additional funding was approved, by a 13-1 vote, to meet the Partnership's request for a 5.9% increase, an additional 3.9% beyond the 2% increase provided by contract agencies in the Recommended Budget.

#### OFFICE FOR THE AGING:

By a vote of 14-0, Legislators authorized \$10,143 as part of the budget to maintain the living wage standard for employees at Foodnet Meals on Wheels.

#### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

By a 9-5 vote, \$8,375 in three-year multi-year funding was added to fund the added cost to purchase electric, vs. gas-powered, vehicles for the department's fleet.

#### ASSESSMENT:

By a unanimous 14-0 vote, Legislators added \$5,641 to the budget, to increase the hours of a new Administrative Assistant position from 35 to 40 hours to facilitate office coverage.

#### BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

Legislators added \$8,430 to the budget to increase the pay for Election Inspectors from \$10 per hour to \$12 per hour. The approval vote was 13-1.

#### COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Legislators, by a vote of 13-1, added \$1,000 to the Attorney's budget to support expenses related to professional education training requirements.

#### Other actions:

Although many legislators expressed support for adding the position of Inspector to the one-person Department of Weights and Measures, which is included as a half-time position in the Recommended Budget, they declined, by a 2-12 vote, to increase that position to full-time, at a cost of \$44,244.

- By a vote of 1-13, Legislators declined to authorize \$8,000 in funding to cover the mandated cost of inmate medicine at the County Jail. Noting that there are a lot of "pressure points" in the Sheriff's budget, County Administrator Mareane said he thinks the amount of money put aside in the budget will be adequate to cover medicine costs.

#### **Potential Tax Impact of Recommendations to Date**

In its first actions, the committee increased target spending over that in the County Administrator's recommended budget by \$81,791 and the use of reserves by \$138,375. If tonight's committee recommendations were approved, the county's total 2017 tax levy would increase by 3.17% (up by 0.18% from the 3% increase in the Administrator's budget), and the county tax rate would stand at \$6.64 per thousand dollars assessed property value, an increase of \$18.39 for the owner of a median-valued \$175,000 home.

The Expanded Budget Committee will next convene Thursday, October 13, to consider further potential recommended amendments to the 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.

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](http://www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2017budget).

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

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