



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Budget Presentation Summary – Week ending September 15, 2017

In three sessions this week, Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee heard budget presentations from 19 County departments and agencies, its first full week of review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's 2018 Recommended Budget.

The following departments and agencies have presented so far:

- September 11: Weights and Measures; Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources (OAR); County Clerk, Tompkins County Area Development; Department of Planning and Sustainability; Workforce Development;
- September 13: Animal Control; County Historian; The History Center; Legislature; Facilities; Highway; Finance;
- September 14: Assigned Counsel; Assessment; Youth Services/Recreation Partnership; Mental Health; Public Health.

The administrator's Recommended Budget would meet the Legislature's 2018 budget goal of a 2.4% increase in the property tax levy, and would decrease the County tax rate for the fourth straight year. As part of the budget, new, recurring revenue from the area's two new casinos funds most of a \$1.36 million allocation to the Contingent Fund, with Administrator Mareane leaving to the Legislature, as a policy decision, how those funds should be allocated.

Highlights from this week's presentations:

MENTAL HEALTH:

The Mental Health budget requests \$171,381 in over-target spending to substantially increase the Department's presence at Tompkins County Jail through new Psychiatric Social Worker and Caseworker positions focused on Jail services. The new positions would enable universal behavioral health and substance abuse assessments at the Jail, appropriate treatment, individualized discharge planning, and case management to connect individuals to services once they're released. While not included in the Recommended Budget, the positions are suggested as a positive policy decision for by the Legislature.

Two other OTRs, related to staffing concerns for the Mental Health Association, were not recommended.

OPPORTUNITIES, ALTERNATIVES, AND RESOURCES:

OAR submitted two over-target requests, not included in the Recommended Budget, but advanced to the Legislature for policy decisions. The Administrator suggests favorable action on a \$6,000 request to support an Advisor for the new *Endeavor House* transitional housing facility; and that \$84,000

requested to underwrite the successful *College Initiative Upstate* program for a second year be modified from target to one-time funding.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL:

Ongoing costs for Assigned Council are projected to rise by \$100,000 due to higher income eligibility thresholds for free legal counsel, with \$100,000 in over-target spending requested, and recommended by the administrator, to cover increased attorneys' fees from eight high-profile cases, all with mandated representation, to be decided in 2018.

PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY:

Though not included in the Recommended Budget, creation of a new Housing Planner position (\$97,227 gross expense) is suggested by the Administrator as a positive policy decision by the Legislature. Interim Commissioner Katherine Borgella cautioned that the county's housing challenges are persistent and extensive, and cannot be addressed adequately at the municipal level or simply by the market; and that targets set in the County's Housing Strategy cannot be met without additional efforts. The new position would supplement existing staff work regarding housing.

Among requests included in the Recommended Budget is funding to support a Business Energy Navigator position approved in 2017—\$50,000 as the first of three years' funding for a staff person to help business with energy needs and resources. Matching funds have been sought under NYSERDA's Clean Energy Community Program.

ASSESSMENT:

Director of Assessment Jay Franklin has requested an additional Real Property Appraiser position, at \$89,061, not included in the budget but suggested as a positive policy decision by the Legislature—additional staff Franklin says is needed to respond to the continually increasing activity in the local real estate market.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES:

The department has requested \$44,665 in over-target spending to increase to full-time the half-time Inspector position, approved in 2017—a request not included in the Recommended Budget.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Not included in the Recommended Budget, but suggested as a policy decision for the Legislature is \$41,398 to support a half-time Administrative Coordinator for the Workforce Development Board, to focus on fiscal reporting to New York State and compliance requirements. Also suggested for favorable decision by the Legislature is \$30,000 to respond to an increase in rent for the Workforce NY Career Center.

THE HISTORY CENTER:

Recommended as part of the budget is \$25,000 in over-target spending for increased bookkeeper hours related to grant reporting and capital campaign responsibilities for the new Tompkins Center for History and Culture.

HIGHWAY:

In the Highway budget, over-target spending is recommended for two pieces of equipment, consistent with the department's equipment replacement plan—a new Gradall excavator for net cost of \$290,000 and a road-side mower tractor for \$75,000. \$50,000 is requested and recommended for materials cost of a 100 by 60-foot storage building, which would be built on site by a county work crew and shared through an in-kind service lease arrangement with the Soil and Water Conservation District.

FACILITIES:

\$36,000 in one-time funding is recommended for a new maintenance vehicle for Facilities.

COUNTY CLERK:

Recommended by the administrator is \$40,000 in one-time funding to continue scanning of County records, through contract with Challenge.

YOUTH SERVICES:

Of five over-target requests, \$7,200 to replace electronic equipment and \$3,000 for the department share of the County Youth Survey, both funded through rollover, are included in the Recommended Budget. More than \$13,000 to support a 2% cost-of-living adjustment for agencies contracting with the County through Youth Services, and \$10,000 for youth worker training are suggested for positive action by the Legislature. \$30,000 that would fund non-profit mini-grants related to the Achieving Youth Results program is not recommended.

LEGISLATURE:

The Legislature's recommended budget includes more than \$15,000 for computer equipment for legislators, and \$2,500 to enable more legislators to attend the annual NYSAC Conference. It was noted that there will be as many as seven new legislators next year.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Monday, September 25.

The 2018 Recommended Budget, along with schedules and other budget-related information (including presentation documents from departments and agencies) is posted on the budget page of the County web site at www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2018budget.

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

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