



Inclusion Through Diversity

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FOUR PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **County Budget Presentation Summary – Week ending September 29, 2017**

In three sessions this week, Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee concluded the presentation phase of the budget process, hearing presentations from 16 County departments and agencies, as it continued to review County Administrator Joe Mareane's 2018 Recommended Budget.

The following departments and agencies presented this week:

- September 25: Information Technology Services; Probation and Community Justice; Department of Social Services; Sheriff's Office and Jail; Department of Emergency Response;
- September 26: Tompkins Community Action; Transportation Planning; Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit; Office of Human Rights; Recycling and Materials Management; Human Resources;
- September 28: Rural Libraries; Tompkins County Public Library; Airport; Cooperative Extension; County Administration.

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:

#### **PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE:**

Suggested for positive action by the Legislature is a request for \$101,657 to fund an additional Senior Probation Officer position—a position whose responsibilities would focus on electronic monitoring and assuming part of the caseload of the Ithaca Community Treatment Court. In its Jail Population Study report, CGR consultants recommend increased focus in these areas to help reduce the jail population.

#### **SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL:**

For the Sheriff's Office, among over-target spending suggested for positive legislative action are \$12,000 for program supplies for the joint Critical Incident and Negotiating Team (first requested last year) and \$5,200 for uniforms for part-time deputies. Undersheriff Brian Robison said the use of part-time deputies at the Airport has already enabled one more deputy to be out on the road, a number he would like to increase to 2.

For the Jail, \$88,647 (salary and fringe) to support an additional jail nurse is suggested for positive action by the Legislature—a position recommended in the CGR report. Undersheriff Robison said the

second nursing position would provide needed extra care for those in the Jail, many of whom are in need for health and mental health services. “To help these folks, they need to be seen,” he said, with nursing service available every day. \$3,966 is also suggested for approval for uniforms for part-time Corrections Officers

#### COUNTY ADMINISTRATION:

Among over-target requests suggested for positive legislative action are two related to Jail population initiatives, as recommended in the CGR report: first-year one-time funding for a Criminal Justice Coordinator position and \$22,000 in one-time funds to underwrite a Sequential Intercept Mapping consultant to assess coordination of Reentry services. Also suggested: \$103,061 to initiate a Public Administration Fellows program (first year of three), which would fund two high-level short-term internships in county government. Administrator Mareane also suggests the Legislature budget in Contingency funding that would support a second Deputy-level manager (\$142,777), if desired by the next County Administrator.

The Administration budget includes more than \$50,000 in multi-year funds for the second year of the County’s Performance Measurement System and \$30,000 to fund the County’s 2018 Climate Survey.

#### DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

Among requests included in the Recommended Budget, \$10,000 in health and safety grants for prospective registered daycare providers to help make needed site improvements. Suggested by the administrator for a positive policy decision by the Legislature is \$42,000 in one-time funds to expand the federal/state funded Solutions to End Homelessness (rapid re-housing and prevention) program. Interim Commissioner Kit Kephart noted that grant funds over the past two years have been sufficient to fill only 70-75% of the service need, and that the \$42,000 is needed to fill the gap.

#### TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:

Among four over-target requests submitted by the Library is one for \$65,286 to restore a 30-hour Youth Services Library position, one of the positions cut at the time of the 2009 recession. Director Susan Currie said the position is sorely needed in the Library’s extremely busy Youth Services department, through which the Library serves as a core component of the community’s educational infrastructure. Administrator Joe Mareane told Legislators that his decision to not recommend comes in context of the great amount of the County’s taxing authority that has been successfully committed over the past several years to address the Library’s structural deficit. Changing priorities this year led to his decision. Asked by one Legislator, Currie acknowledged that a half-time position, should that be proposed, would be very helpful. The Administrator has suggested positive action on a \$23,000 request for ongoing funding to maintain operations.

Many Legislators thanked Director Currie, who will retire next month, for all that she has done over her years of service, and Currie repeatedly thanked the Legislature for its strong support of the Library and the community. “I have loved being director of the Library,” Currie said. “It’s a library to be proud of and thanks for your work.”

#### DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

Director of Emergency Response Lee Shurtleff called his recommended budget the most positive he has brought forward—his target budget containing a 0% increase, with a multitude of important projects continuing to move forward. Shurtleff said significant positive financial impact comes from a new system of formula-based reimbursement grants for technology and equipment expense, which has made available \$700,000 in revenue to offset those expenses which, while it can’t be assured on an annual basis, provides his department some flexibility. Concerned about succession planning—with

several eligible for retirement within the next three years, the director said it may be time to consider hiring a Deputy Director and, as part of his target budget, has included funds under the old Fire/Disaster/EMS Coordinator line.

Suggested for positive legislative action as part of the Emergency Response budget is \$25,000 to fund half the expense of a consultant to work with the TCCOG Emergency Medical Services Task Force to assess current and projected gaps in EMS service in the county, and identify strategies to address those gaps—remainder of the cost to be contributed by towns and villages.

#### TOMPKINS CONSOLIDATED AREA TRANSIT:

As part of the TCAT budget, the Administrator suggests that the Legislature approve a shift from one-time to ongoing, target spending the \$50,000 supplemental contribution that has been provided over the past couple of years to TCAT. Among major influences identified by TCAT officials, increased demand for service; uncertainty regarding future federal and state funding, and fuel costs; and uncertainty in parts expense—including expensive hybrid batteries and for an aging bus fleet.

#### TRANSPORTATION PLANNING:

\$3,571 in one-time funding is recommended to provide the local share of a new online information technology platform for operations, trip reservations, and customer information for Gadabout.

#### HUMAN RESOURCES:

Among eight over-target requests (three of them included in the Recommended Budget), Commissioner Amy Guereri said her top priority is a part-time Personnel Assistant position, requested at \$34,680 in ongoing funding, and suggested for approval by the Legislature as one-time. The Commissioner said the position, in providing adequate staffing, will promote higher standards of customer service, and support cross-training of staff and succession planning.

#### COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:

Among requests is partial funding to support a new Operations Manager position (cost: \$60,000, split between one-time and target) in charge of operations and administrative oversight—focusing on systems and processes to build a more inclusive organization, and improve efficiency. Director Ken Schlather notes that restructuring of the executive director's position is needed, with the organization's tripling in size over the past 14 years. The position is suggested by the Administrator for positive action by the Legislature.

#### OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

Three over-target requests funded through department rollover—expenses for two conferences and to continue Fair Housing testing—are included in the Recommended Budget. In her presentation, Director Karen Baer stressed her office's dual goals of enforcement and outreach; and the importance of collaboration in successfully carrying out its work and programs, which are of the highest professional standard. Director Baer expressed concern that she believes OHR staff is underutilized for County training and human rights expertise.

#### RECYCLING AND MATERIALS MANAGEMENT:

Director Barbara Eckstrom called 2018 a "year of stability," with a stable budget and fees. For the department's successful Food Scrap Drop Spot program, Eckstrom said the goal is to add drop spots next year in Groton and Newfield, with the long-term goal of having 20 drop spots by 2020. One OTR, for \$16,700, recommended as part of the budget, supports the added cost of purchasing an electric plug-in sedan and includes the estimated \$2,000 cost of a charging station.

#### AIRPORT:

As part of his presentation, Airport Director Mike Hall said the Airport budget is essentially flat for the third year in a row, with hundreds of thousands of dollars in operational costs saved by initiatives implemented by Deputy Director of Operations Josh Nalley. Hall stated, “We are the most efficient and reliable airport in Upstate New York.”

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES:

Among four over-target requests suggested for favorable policy action by the Legislature is \$15,000 for an annual ITS Security Audit and \$10,000 (\$4,000 of that one-time) for cybersecurity training for employees. Included in the budget is \$7,700 in one-time funds to initiate a new project assistant mentoring program to support recruitment for entry-level IT positions.

#### TOMPKINS COMMUNITY ACTION:

As part of the budget, \$100,000 in one-time funding is recommended to fund an HVAC system upgrade and roof repair.

#### SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT:

Three over-target requests are recommended as part of the Administrator’s budget—including \$50,000 in support for a part-time engineer for stream stabilization design, which will provide in-house expertise for water resource projects (including possible design support for the Natural Infrastructure program), with cost savings over hiring private engineering firms.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Tuesday, October 10, which will be the first of as many as three voting meetings. Administrator Mareane will provide a presentation on the recommended Capital Program at the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Legislature will hold its annual public information meeting on the budget, the Community Budget Forum, Monday October 2, 7:00 p.m., at Legislature Chambers, located at the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca.

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](http://www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2018budget).

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