



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Budget Presentation Summary – As of September 17, 2018

In three sessions over the past two weeks, Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee heard budget presentations from 20 more County departments and agencies, as they continued to review County Administrator Jason Molino's 2019 Recommended Budget.

The following departments and agencies have presented so far:

- September 11: Tompkins County Public Library; Probation and Community Justice; Weights and Measures; Department of Planning and Sustainability; Tompkins County Area Development; the County Attorney; Tompkins Community Action
- September 12: Information Technology Services; Highway; Human Resources; Finance: the Office for the Aging; Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit
- September 17: Department of Social Services; Sheriff's Office and Jail; Rural Libraries; Youth Services and Recreation Partnership; Assessment; Workforce Development Board and the Workforce NY Career Center.

The administrator's \$186.5 million Recommended Budget would increase the County's property tax levy by 1.43%, (less than the Legislature's 2.2% levy goal for 2019) and would decrease the County tax rate for the fifth consecutive year, due to a substantial increase in the county's tax base. A \$3 increase in the County's Solid Waste Annual Fee is also recommended. Under the Recommended Budget, the County property tax bill for the owner of a median-valued \$185,000 home would increase by \$15.40.

Presentation Highlights:

TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:

Among three over-target requests, all recommended by the County Administrator, is \$25,000 in ongoing target funding to meet contractual obligations and projected health insurance increases, and \$40,000 in one-time funds to support a pilot project to bring book delivery to unserved patrons, such as seniors, and provide drive-up book drop locations throughout the county.

PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE:

Recommended as part of the budget are 1.5 additional staff positions—an additional Probation Officer and a Senior Probation Officer to begin at mid-year, both addressing anticipated needed related to implementation of "Raise the Age" legislation, which raises the age of criminal responsibility starting this October. \$12,000 in additional target spending is also recommended, to support increased usage of electronic monitoring.

PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY:

Among five over-target requests (four of them recommended) are continued funding (year two of three years) to support the Business Energy Navigator position and \$45,000 in one-time funding (through department rollover) to underwrite a Municipal Housing Affordability Matching Fund, a pilot program to assist municipalities with initiatives related to affordable housing.

Both PLANNING and ASSESSMENT departments have filed requests related to electric vehicles—Planning requesting \$23,550 in one-time funding, through rollover funds to replace its 2010 Prius with an all-electric vehicle; Assessment, \$15,000 in over-target one-time funding is recommended to replace an existing vehicle with an electric vehicle, with County Administration to provide \$5,000 toward the purchase. Department costs are offset with NYSERDA grant funding

Three of the departments submitted requests related to succession planning:

- **WEIGHTS AND MEASURES:** \$38,130 in one-time funding is recommended to help prepare for the retirement of Director Don Ellis in 2020.
- **HUMAN RESOURCES:** \$7,500 in one-time funding, through department rollover, is recommended to provide overlap in succession with the retirement of Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources, Stephen Estes during 2019. Funding for other staff positions in Human Resources include \$44,643 for the position of Employee Benefits Assistant (to replace an expired Project Assistant position) and a Personnel Assistant Trainee (\$64,877 in two-year funding, to prepare for potential retirements during that time)
- **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES:** \$43,304 in one-time funding is recommended for the position of Telecom/Programming Administrator, to provide overlap with the existing employee, who will retire at mid-year.

HIGHWAY:

Over-target one-time funding is recommended to replace four pieces of heavy equipment, offset by revenue from sale of the old equipment—total net cost, \$405,000.

TOMPKINS CONSOLIDATED AREA TRANSIT:

TCAT is requesting an additional \$73,000 from each of its funding underwriters (Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca, and Cornell University) beyond their current allocations—\$869,522. The requested increase (first year of anticipated multi-year of requests) is focused on meeting expected service needs related to future development and economic growth, with a needed 15% increase in services projected over the next five years. “We’re just trying to keep up with the service that we understand you will need,” TCAT budget chair Bill Gray said. As part of its TCAT contribution, Tompkins County also allocates an additional \$120,000 each year from the Mortgage Recording Tax, funding TCAT officials plan to target to help address the system’s capital needs.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

The Department will request a \$300,000 adjustment to the 2019 budget to address the net local cost of homeless housing services through its favored proposed provider, St. John’s Community Services.

It was noted that the department’s “Raise the Age” expense had been projected at more than \$12 million (100% State-reimbursed.) The State, however, recently announced that local districts will not be billed for placements in RTA detention facilities, that the providers instead will be billed directly. The budget will be modified accordingly.

The Department once again this year requests \$42,000 in over-target one-time funding to supplement federal and state grant support for the Solutions to End Homelessness Program, which provides rapid re-housing and prevention services, through a DSS contract with Tompkins Community Action. Grant funding, it's noted, covers only 75% of the current service need.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE:

The Sheriff's budget includes an over-target request for \$24,093 in net cost toward an additional Sheriff's Deputy who would serve as a School Resource Officer at TST BOCES. The OTR, requesting three-year funding and recommended by the Administrator, comes in response to a BOCES request made nearly a year ago, and BOCES would underwrite the position with more than \$72,000 in revenue during the school year. The requested OTR would fund the position during the remaining two months of the year. Undersheriff Brian Robison noted that the BOCES campus is source of the second highest number of calls to which the department responds—with 171 calls received since the beginning of last year. BOCES Superintendent Jeff Matteson spoke to the need for the position, saying the District is looking for "someone who will be part of our team" who will be able to take preventive actions on the campus, and provide benefit to students and a positive experience with law enforcement.

RURAL LIBRARIES:

Requested is \$14,700 in over-target one-time funding, recommended by the County Administrator, to purchase Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), Narcan kits, and related supplies, certification and training for the county's five rural libraries. It is noted that this would provide the libraries, which function as important hubs of community activity, with the life-saving equipment and training to respond to two types of medical emergencies.

YOUTH SERVICES/RECREATION PARTNERSHIP:

Among three over-target requests, all recommended by the County Administrator, is \$50,000 in target funding to increase structural support to the Municipal Youth Services system--\$45,000 to restore an Assistant Coordinator position lost as part of recession-related cutbacks in 2009, and \$5,000 to support a full-time program manager for Town of Danby youth programs.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Thursday, September 27.

The 2019 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/2019budget.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee, 844-8440; County Administrator Jason Molino, 274-5551.

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