



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Committee Begins to Advance Amendments to Recommended 2019 Budget

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee have begun to recommend changes to County Administrator Jason Molino's Recommended Budget delivered to them last month, marking the start of a new phase of the County's 2019 budget process.

At their initial voting meeting, Legislators recommended the following changes to the budget. Those recommendations may be reconsidered at later expanded committee meetings and will require approval by the full Legislature to become final.

The committee first approved a series of budget adjustments, advanced by County Administration, to reflect fiscal changes that have occurred since the Recommended Budget was delivered to the Legislature—all approved by unanimous vote:

--DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

- \$304,888 in target funding was approved to increase the budget for Homelessness Services.
- A \$335,872 reduction in the DSS budget was approved, decreasing budgeted pass-through amounts for the Raise the Age program, based on recent info from New York State.

--FRINGE EXPENSE:

- Unallocated fringe was reduced by \$101,220, reflecting savings from lower than projected health insurance premium growth through the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium (5% instead of 6%).
- Unallocated fringe was also reduced by \$94,431, reflecting savings from New York State's recent modification of pension rates.

--TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:

The Recommended Budget was reduced by \$40,000 to reflect the Library's withdrawal of the recommended "Removing Barriers to Access" over-target request.

--SHERIFF'S OFFICE:

The Recommended Budget was reduced by \$24,093 to reflect withdrawal of the recommended funding of TST-BOCES' request for a school resource officer.

Approved budget amendments advanced by Legislators:

TOMPKINS CORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

In a new item added to the budget, \$110,000 in multi-year funding was approved to support a TC3 business intelligence and data analytics project—a combination of consulting support and software solutions, to replace an outdated analytics system. Funding would be reduced to \$80,000 in 2020. The amendment was approved by a 13-1 vote. Budget Chair Michael Lane pointed out that the College did not ask for any increase in sponsor contributions from Tompkins and Cortland Counties this year, since Cortland County had indicated it would not support any increase in partner share.

OPPORTUNITIES, ALTERNATIVES, AND RESOURCES:

Legislators, by unanimous vote, changed a recommended \$50,000 to support a Parolee/Housing Case Manager from one-time to three-year funding. It had initially been proposed to move to target funding, but after some legislators questioned whether that would be premature, the request was amended to change to multi-year.

HUMAN SERVICES COALITION:

In a new addition to the budget, \$15,000 in one-time funding was approved, without dissent, to provide succession support to the Coalition, whose long-time director, Kathy Schlather, will retire in 2019. \$3,000 will support the Director search; \$12,000, 12 months transition support from Schlather for the new director. It was noted that the Coalition has had only two Directors over the past 26 years.

HUMAN SERVICE COALITION AGENCIES – LawNY:

By a 10-4 vote, \$40,000 in three-year funding was approved for a new addition to the budget, underwriting additional paraprofessional staffing to provide early intervention support services for county residents facing the threat of homelessness. The staffing would provide case management and legal advice in situations, such as those that could lead to eviction, to those who can't afford an attorney.

OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

By a 12-2 vote, a new addition was approved for the Office of Human Rights budget to allocate \$5,000 in one-time funding to pay for Conflict Coaching services from the Community Dispute Resolution Center for OHR clients (at a rate of \$50 per hour). The one-on-one coaching is aimed at helping to increase an individual's capability to manage and respond to conflict.

LEGISLATURE:

By unanimous vote, \$900 in target funding for Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal membership, and related spending authority, was moved from the Legislature to the Department of Planning and Sustainability budget.

PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY:

\$13,989 in one-time funding was approved, to support priority projects for three of the County's planning advisory boards: \$4,989 for the Environmental Management Council's ongoing inventory of the County's Unique Natural Areas; \$8,000 to underwrite production of a Clean Boating Map by the Water Resources Council; and \$1,000 for public education materials on the environmental impacts of, and alternatives to, single-use plastic bags. By a vote of 11-3, the item was amended to make approval of the plastic bag materials portion contingent upon approval by the Legislature of a plastic bag ban. The complete amendment to the budget was then approved by a 12-2 vote.

HISTORY CENTER:

By unanimous vote, a \$20,000 request for an office manager/bookkeeper, to be shared by the History Center and Historic Ithaca (not recommended by the County Administrator as part of the budget) was approved for continuation, as target funding rather than one-time. Proposed restoration to the budget as one-time funding failed by a 1-13 vote. Legislator Rich John noted that the position has been in place for three years, and will be even more critical now, with responsibilities related to the Tompkins Center for History and Culture capital campaign, grant management, and operational responsibility related to the Center and its tenants.

Other actions:

A proposed amendment to change \$88,000 in funding to support OAR's successful College Initiative Upstate program from one-time to target failed by a 3-11 vote. A proposed amendment to change funding to half target/half one-time failed for lack of a second.

Legislators began to consider a new proposal, through the County Administration budget, to contribute \$10,000 in one-time funding to the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce "Live in Ithaca" marketing program aimed at workforce recruitment. Discussion was suspended, however, to permit additional information about the program to be provided after the committee resumes deliberations.

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 \$129,237 and the use of reserves by \$169,896. If tonight's committee recommendations were approved, the county's total 2019 tax levy would increase by 1.69% (up by 0.26% from the 1.43% increase in the Administrator's budget), and the county tax rate would stand at \$6.41 per thousand dollars assessed property value, an increase of \$15.47 for the owner of a median-valued \$185,000 home.

The Expanded Budget Committee will reconvene Wednesday, October 10, 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 2019 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/2019budget.

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

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