



Inclusion Through Diversity

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legislature Hears Positive Comments on Recommended Budget

The session was short, the comments appreciative, as the Tompkins County Legislature tonight took comment on the recommended amended County Budget for 2012.

Tonight's formal budget hearing lasted only ten minutes, and four people spoke. All of them, representing the county human services community, thanked Legislators for their work in balancing the need for services with fiscal pressures, and providing support in difficult times.

Nancy Burston, assistant director of the Tompkins County Human Services Coalition, on behalf of the non-profit community, expressed thanks for the Legislature's support, saying agencies are doing their best to tighten their belts and to collaborate more, working to meet the demand for services with fewer available dollars. Sue Dale Hall of the Tompkins County Child Development Council and Neil Oolie of Loaves and Fishes both said they are seeing increased pressure on individuals and families, and Tommy Miller, who serves with organizations including Catholic Charities, noted that this is a community rich in resources, and cautioned that preventive programs are important. All thanked the Legislature for its careful deliberations on the budget.

The \$161.9 million recommended 2012 budget, which includes \$77.5 million in local dollar spending, would raise the tax levy (the total amount of property tax revenue needed to balance the budget) by 3.99%. The countywide average tax rate in the recommended amended budget would increase by 3.1%, to \$6.67 per thousand dollars assessed property value, an increase of \$31.85 for the average \$160,000 home. The recommended levy increase is just over 1% above the 2.92% level that would be required to fall within the state property tax cap.

The Legislature can further amend the budget before final passage. The adoption vote is scheduled for the Legislature's next meeting on Tuesday, November 15, which begins at 5:30 p.m. at Legislative Chambers in the County Courthouse, 320 N. Tioga Street in Ithaca.

Citizens are encouraged to submit their budget comments online at the County's web site at www.tompkins-co.org (click on "County Budget") or through the county budget Facebook page, which also may be accessed through the county website budget page. They may also call the Legislature Office at 274-5434, if needed, to obtain contact information for their county Legislator.

There will be another opportunity to comment on the budget at the beginning of the Legislature's November 15 meeting.

Contact: Martha Robertson, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 272-0584; James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 387-4058.

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