



Inclusion Through Diversity

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Agencies Much of the Focus, as County Budget Review Continues

At their next-to-last review session before beginning to consider potential changes to County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2013 budget, Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee examined proposals from eight more County departments and agencies tonight.

Presenting were Tompkins County SPCA Animal Control; the Human Services Coalition and Coalition agencies; Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources (OAR); Rural Library Services; the Soil and Water Conservation District; Workforce Investment Board and Workforce One-Stop Center; and the County Facilities Division.

Highlights from tonight's review:

For the Human Services Coalition, the County Administrator has recommended a 2% increase in over-target spending of over \$6,000, and continuation of a \$30,000 part-time support specialist, as one-time, to coordinate workshops and provide in-depth technical assistance to agencies. Coalition director Kathy Schlather said agencies are needing increased support services and workshops for them need to continue to change to meet changing needs, and both the 2-1-1 program and Health Planning Council are experiencing and anticipate increased demand.

For 17 Human Services Coalition agencies, Schlather said federal, state and local funding is down and there is uncertainty among agencies regarding the prospect for future funding, causing instability in staffing. She said demand for service continues to grow while funding is down. The administrator has recommended nearly \$34,000 in over-target spending for agencies, to restore an attorney position and to help subsidize AmeriCorps positions in Neighborhood Legal Services, and provide support for the Southside Community Center. As part of the review, Legislator Pam Mackesey expressed deep concern regarding the effects on agencies of cuts year after year, and requested information documenting the ongoing impact. Legislator Peter Stein spoke of the benefits of collaboration among agencies.

For OAR, the County Administrator has recommended \$25,000 in over-target spending to apply to the agency's revolving Bail Fund and staff expenses needed to handle an increased caseload. The agency had requested total over-target spending of more than \$68,000. Agency director Deb Dietrich tonight requested that the budget be amended to include another \$25,000 in over-target spending for those purposes. She noted the \$25,000 already recommended by the administrator would be needed to maintain very limited staff at current levels, while the demand for the agency's services continues to rise, a 25% increase over the past two years.

Included in the County Administrator's budget is more than \$3,000 in over-target spending for the Finger Lakes Library System and the county's five rural libraries. The 2% funding increase supports operations and materials to maintain quality service to meet increased demands for library services.

For the Soil and Water Conservation District, the County Administrator has recommended more than \$12,000 in over-target spending to support a 2% maintenance-of-effort increase for operating expenses and overhead, and to provide a 2% increase in salary and benefits for staff. But he failed to recommend a requested \$40,000 to help underwrite staff and other resource costs related to the District's Hydrilla eradication program in Cayuga Inlet. Agency director Craig Schutt reported, however, that situation has improved somewhat since his request was prepared, since he recently learned that there will be some Federal funding available beginning in 2013 to support staff costs related to such efforts.

While the Workforce Investment Board and One-Stop Center submitted no-change budgets with no over-target requests, WIB director Julia Mattick cautioned that there is more uncertainty than ever regarding estimated revenue under the Workforce Investment Act for 2013, depending on what happens regarding the federal budget. She said the New York State Department of Labor could also be subject to significant cuts statewide.

Facilities Director Arel LeMaro told Legislators his budget is slightly higher than the current year, due in part to fringe increases and some items related to maintenance and security. One point he noted was that the County has taken on more buildings, with no increase in staff, with the square footage currently maintained per person nearly twice what it was in 1999, and the square footage cleaned per cleaner also up significantly. LeMaro said energy-related building improvements several years ago have kept utility costs stable, and that effects will be fully felt once the debt for that capital project is paid off in a few more years.

The committee will reconvene next Monday, October 15 at 5:30 p.m., to hear what are scheduled to be its final presentations. Expanded Budget Committee meetings take place at Legislature Chambers of the County Courthouse, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca. Voting on recommended changes will begin October 23.

An electronic version of the 2013 Tentative Budget, the Expanded Budget Committee schedule, and other information regarding the Tentative Budget are posted on the budget page of the County web site at [http:// www.tompkins-co.org/ctyadmin/Budget/index.htm](http://www.tompkins-co.org/ctyadmin/Budget/index.htm).

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