



Inclusion Through Diversity

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**TWO PAGES**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Legislators Recommend 2013 Budget Amendments**

The County's 2013 budget process moved forward tonight, as Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee recommended that the Legislature amend County Administrator Joe Mareane's 2013 Tentative Budget. The amended budget, to be presented to the Legislature in special session next Tuesday, would increase the County tax levy by 3.77% and the countywide average tax rate by 1.95%. The recommended tax rate of \$6.80 per thousand is 2 cents higher than in the Administrator's budget, and an increase of 13 cents compared to 2012, representing an increase of \$20.83 for the average \$160,000 home.

In amendments during two voting sessions, the committee added \$124,480 to the Administrator's budget. The recommended levy increase of 3.77% compares to a 3.48% increase that had been recommended by the County Administrator.

Legislators recommended the amended budget by an 11-1 vote, with Legislator Pat Pryor voting no, and Legislators Carol Chock, Kathy Luz Herrera, and Nathan Shinagawa excused. While stressing that she appreciates all the work that has gone into consideration of the budget, Legislator Pryor said she cannot support the levy increase of 3.77%. Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne indicated she was willing to support the amended budget at this point to advance it to public hearing, but did not know what her position would be in the final vote. Legislator Mike Lane said he is not enthusiastic about the levy figure, but called the budget a fair and reasoned effort by Legislators, which should now be put before the public for comment.

It was noted that the increase in levy in the recommended amended budget and the increase in the cost of mandated programs are nearly identical. The recommended levy increase compares with has been estimated as a 3.15% increase consistent with the State's property tax cap; however, Administrator Mareane advised tonight that estimate might change a bit, based on recent information from the State on how the tax cap may be calculated.

Before reaching their recommendation, Legislators made several more changes to the budget, beyond amendments approved two nights ago, recommendations that may still be reconsidered as the process continues and will need approval of the Legislature, as part of the budget, to become final.

#### **TOMPKINS CONSOLIDATED AREA TRANSIT:**

Legislators, by an 8-4 vote, approved \$100,000 in one-time funding toward a TCAT capital reserve program for bus replacement, and \$10,978 in TCAT capital funds for other shorter-term capital needs. The City of Ithaca and Cornell University must approve matched allocations under the TCAT partnership agreement.

#### **TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:**

\$50,000 in additional target funding was approved, by a 7-5 margin, toward reducing the Library's structural deficit, beyond the \$159,000 in over-target spending already contained in the Administrator's budget.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES, ALTERNATIVES, AND RESOURCES:**

In a revisit of an earlier action, Legislators by a 7-5 vote increased the contribution to OAR by \$10,000.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:**

\$2,500 in one-time funding was added for interns and project assistants, approved by a vote of 7-5.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

By a 10-2 vote, the purchase of hybrid vehicles, using department rollover, was approved.

PERSONNEL/COUNTY ADMINISTRATION:

Without dissent, a transfer of \$15,000 for diversity and inclusion initiatives from Personnel to County Administration was approved.

Other actions:

In a series of votes on several options, Legislators failed to approve any changes in Youth Services funding, to address State and County reductions over the past several years.

The proposed addition of a librarian at the County Library failed by a margin of 3-9, and the proposed removal of \$20,000 in one-time funding for technology failed for lack of a second.

Proposed addition of a half-time Weights and Measures inspector for just over \$43,000, increasing staffing for the one-person department, failed by a tie vote of 6-6.

By another tie vote of 6-6, Legislators failed to support \$40,000 in one-time contingency funding to reimburse staff expense for the Soil and Water Conservation District related to Hydrilla eradication.

A proposal to remove \$76,689 in unallocated capital funds from the Capital Program for 2013, to help reduce the tax levy, failed by a 3-9 margin.

Proposed elimination of \$42,000 to support a structural deficit for Cooperative Extension failed for lack of a second.

Legislators declined to change \$69,000 for countywide training from target to one-time, by a vote of 4-8.

On Tuesday, October 30, the Legislature will consider the recommended amended budget. Once the Legislature formally adopts recommended amendments to the County Administrator's budget, that package becomes the basis of deliberations, including the Legislature's public hearing on the budget. The public hearing will take place Wednesday, November 13, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Legislature Chambers of the County Courthouse, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca. The Legislature's budget adoption vote is scheduled November 20.

*Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee, 387-4058; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.*

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