



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second Night of 2013 Budget Review

Six more County departments presented their proposed budgets tonight, as Legislators acting an Expanded Budget Committee, conducted their second review session of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2013 County budget.

Presenting tonight were the Legislature office, Human Rights Commission, Highway Division, Department of Emergency Response, Health Department, and the Sheriff.

As part of tonight's review, Highway Director Jeff Smith told Legislators last winter's mild weather, and the resulting decrease in this year's town plowing contracts, has enabled his department to direct resources to restore \$186,000 to the road materials budget, as well as to fund a much needed Motor Equipment Operator position. Staffing, however, it was noted, would inch up to 41 full-time equivalent positions, compared to 49 just four years ago. Legislature Chair Martha Robertson remarked, "It is clear this department is one that has suffered serious cuts." Smith said a \$56,000 investment in new division-wide highway management system software, an over-target expense recommended by the County Administrator, will enable the department to collect important data and develop an asset plan—including not just the road but also other related elements—to determine value and how to effectively apply resources.

In what he termed a maintenance of effort budget, Emergency Response Director Lee Shurtleff said a full-time Dispatch Supervisor position, which he again requested but the Administrator did not recommend, is needed to address growing call demand and quality assurance efforts, but that his department can live without the position for another year. Legislator Dooley Kiefer said she would like to see the budget reflect the potential, once a permanent Communications Center Manager is hired. Among over-target spending recommended, the Emergency Response budget includes funding for equipment replacement and to support staff training needs.

Public Health Director Frank Kruppa said lost revenue from billing rule changes related to children with special care needs, reduction of Early Intervention administration dollars from state takeover of contracting with providers, and for some in-home nursing services now that the County has closed its Certified Home Health Agency are among the major factors influencing his budget. Through a new \$285,000 Environmental Health permitting system, funded through rollover and recommended by the Administrator, the department would strive to convert permitting operations to a paperless system within five years.

Sheriff Ken Lansing cited a reduction in overtime costs and efficiencies in vehicle maintenance as among the major influences in his budget, along with recent increases in fuel costs. He again stressed the need to fill the vacant Executive Assistant position, recommended by the Administrator at a lower level than requested, to provide needed confidential support to the Sheriff and Undersheriff, and to enable the mandated Civil Division (at three positions rather than the recommended five) and, in part,

to resolve an 18-month backlog in crime reporting, already noted by New York State. Current staffing level in the division, Sheriff Lansing noted, does not allow the department to keep up with daily operations. The Sheriff also expressed hope to return in future years to a vehicle replacement schedule of four-five cars per year; funding for two replacements is recommended as part of the Administrator's budget.

Legislators will hear from six more departments, when the Committee reconvenes on Monday, September 24, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at Legislature Chambers of the County Courthouse, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca.

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),

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

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