



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Budget Review Continues

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee reviewed the proposed budgets of six more County departments, as their review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2013 budget entered its third week.

Presenting tonight were Weights and Measures, the Personnel Department, Mental Health, Planning, the Office for the Aging, and Information Technology Services (ITS).

Information Technology has submitted more than \$200,000 in over-target requests, nearly all recommended by the County Administrator as investments in technology needed to provide a diminished staff with the tools needed to maintain the current level of service, and recognizing the importance of technology in connecting the government with its citizens. Among recommendations are creation of a new Deputy Director position within ITS, , as well as funds to maintain a variety of current systems and to support the County's improved web site, to be in place by next year. Director Greg Potter called his operation "an overworked extremely busy department with a number of responsibilities building up," with about 50 IT projects and initiatives that must be addressed over the next two years.

Included in the Personnel budget, and recommended by the administrator, is a broad organizational initiative to also help employees do more with less—\$84,000 in over-target spending to support job-specific proficiency and skills training for employees and to underwrite county diversity and inclusion initiatives and cultural competency training.

For Mental Health, the administrator has recommended nearly \$55,000 in over-target spending to support an additional clerical support position, to provide reception, scheduling, and support to the Mental Health Clinic staff and customers. Commissioner Dr. Susan Romanczuk-Smelcer told Legislators that position is key to maximizing departmental productivity and efficiency, including handling the increased data collection, follow-up, and paperwork requirements associated with the demands of Clinic Restructuring.

The Planning Department budget would add an intermunicipal Sustainability Planner position, recommended by the County Administrator, focused on sustainability within government, which would begin part way through the year and be half-funded by the City of Ithaca. Planning Commissioner Ed Marx said among the issues to be addressed would be further developing the "green fleet" program, outreach and staff engagement on sustainability, and monitoring progress toward established goals. He said it's likely a third municipal partner could join in supporting such a position in 2014.

Office for the Aging Director Lisa Holmes, as part of her budget presentation, talked of the importance of services for low-income seniors that had been provided under the Weatherization Referral Assistance and Packaging (WRAP) program, suspended by New York State. Administrator Mareane

did not support \$30,000 in over-target spending to fund a temporary outreach worker to maintain services of the home repair program. The administrator noted that the State has chosen to withdraw funding for this program, and the County should not set the precedent of filling the void to fund such State programs with local dollars.

Legislators will review six more recommended budgets, when the Committee reconvenes on Thursday, October 4, 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),

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