



Inclusion Through Diversity

Marcia E. Lynch, Public Information Officer
607-274-5555, Office
607-227-2152, Cell
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Budget Review Begins

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee tonight began review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2013 County Budget, hearing their first seven presentations from County departments. The committee is scheduled to meet nine times between now and the end of October.

The 2013 Recommended Budget holds total expenditures nearly steady at \$164.8 million (an increase of 0.4%), and would increase the \$80.0 million portion supported by local dollars by just over 3% because of decreased state and federal reimbursements. The total tax levy would increase by 3.48%, and tax rate would rise by 11 cents, to \$6.78 per \$1,000 assessed value—resulting in an \$18 increase to the owner of the average \$160,000 home.

Tonight's presentations came from the Airport, Assessment Department, Assigned Counsel Office, Board of Elections, Finance Department, and County Clerk, with information also presented on the recommended Capital Program for the next five years. The County Administrator recommended over-target spending requested by all departments presenting tonight.

The administrator gave partial approval of a request from Assessment—agreeing to a requested upgrade of a data collector position, but at a lower level—funding of nearly \$35,000 instead of the nearly \$56,000 requested. Assessment Director Jay Franklin noted that his department has shrunk from 19.5 positions in 2000 to 10 this year, with the additional position keeping the staff at 10 for 2013. Franklin said his department compensates for its decreased staffing through greater efficiency through technology. Assessment has lost \$150,000 in annual State Assessment Aid and another \$22,000 in STAR reimbursement aid.

Regarding the Capital Program, debt service for 1992 public improvements (Mental Health Building, GIS System, Solid Waste, and TCAT) is paid off with a final \$150,000 payment in 2012, and refinancing at lower interest rates has saved another \$153,000. The recommended Capital Program anticipates support through short-term financing of two new bridge projects, replacement of the Seneca Road and Waterburg Road bridges in the Town of Ulysses, to begin in 2013. It also continues support of the Aquifer Study (this year through target funding after several years' support through reserves), and includes unallocated capacity of more than \$75,000 that could be directed toward such projects as the Legislature relocation. Other capital projects recommended to be funded through department budgets include a new case management system for the District Attorney's Office and a new Environmental Health Division permitting system in the Health Department.

For the County Clerk's Office, addition of a staff position at the Department of Motor Vehicles, to handle current workload, is offset through increased revenue. The Clerk's Office has finished scanning of 9,000 boxes of records stored in the Old Library into the Office's digital records system. An over-target request of over \$28,000, recommended by the administrator, would support spot verification of each box before the paper records are destroyed.

Legislators will hear from six more County departments when the committee reconvenes on Monday, September 17, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Legislature Chambers in the County Courthouse.

The 2013 Recommended Budget, along with other budget-related information including the detailed Expanded Budget Committee schedule, are available for review and download on the budget page of the County web site at <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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