



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget Committee Wraps Up Presentation Phase of 2014 Budget Review

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee heard from some of the County's largest departments tonight, as they held the final presentation meeting for departments and agencies as part of the 2014 budget process. Beginning next week, the committee will begin voting on recommended changes to the Recommend County Budget, prepared by County Administrator Joe Mareane.

Presenting tonight were County Administration, the County Clerk, Mental Health, Planning, Probation and Community Justice, the District Attorney, and the Sheriff's Office, along with Rural Library Services and Tompkins Community Action. Many of the budget requests included over-target requests, all recommend in full or in part by the County Administrator.

Among the plans reviewed tonight, the Administrator in his budget has included \$50,000 in over-target funding in the County Clerk's budget (\$90,000 had been requested) to support scanning of four more departments' records into the department's electronic document management system.

For Mental Health, Commissioner Sue Romanczuk told legislators there are many changes influencing her department, and all of the behavioral health community—among them, expectations that the Affordable Care Act will result in more individuals seeking mental health and substance abuse services, financial and coordinated care requirements recommended by the Governor's Medicaid Redesign Team, and ongoing focus on regulatory compliance. In these times of change, she said staff has been asked to work differently. Among three over-target requests, all recommended as part of the budget, is a \$44,000 request to replace three cars in the department's aging fleet, many more than a decade old.

For the District Attorney, the administrator has recommended more than \$26,000 in over target funds to reclassify the Assistant District Attorney position serving City Courts to a regular ADA position, to achieve parity with other assistants in the department.

As its first-priority over-target request, also recommended by the administrator, Planning requests more than \$19,000 to return all planners to full-time restoring hours reduced over the past few years.

Tompkins Community Action director Lee Dillon reported that her agency has been hit hard by the effects of federal sequestration—reductions of more than \$650,000 in program funding. The agency requested \$50,000 in over-target funds to help offset that shortfall; the administrator recommended \$25,000. Pointing out that TCA has not asked for OTRs in past years and that every Tompkins County dollar awarded leverages nearly \$37.00 in outside support, the director asked the legislators seriously consider funding the full over-target request. Without that funding, she cautioned her agency might not be able to provide the required local match to obtain federal funding to continue programs serving the county's most vulnerable households.

The Legislature holds its annual Community Budget Forum, a public information meeting on the budget, tomorrow, Thursday, October 17, at 7 p.m. at Legislature Chambers, located on the Second Floor of the Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca (enter by the Park Entrance). Citizens are invited to the meeting to learn about and discuss the recommended budget.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Monday, October 21 for the first of three scheduled voting meetings, where Legislators will propose and consider recommended modifications to the recommended budget.

The administrator's budget, with total expenditures of \$170.2 million and local dollar spending of \$81.6 million recommends a 3.54% rise in the tax levy and would increase County property taxes by \$21 for the owner of an average \$163,000 home.

The 2014 Recommended Budget and other budget information are available for review at the budget page of the County web site at <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/Budget/index>.)

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

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