



Inclusion Through Diversity

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Library and TCAT Budgets Included in Latest Budget Review Session

Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee heard seven more budget presentations tonight, as their review of County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2014 County Budget entered its third week.

Legislators heard presentations from the Department of Social Services, Personnel, and Weights and Measures, as well as the Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), the Tompkins County Public Library, the Soil and Water Conservation District, and Transportation Planning.

There were no over-target requests at issue in tonight's presentations—either no over-target requests were submitted or those that those requested were recommended by the Administrator.

For the Library, the Administrator's budget increases County support by 12%, or \$315,000, including \$175,000 in ongoing "target" funds and \$140,000 in one-time County reserves, to address the Library's \$400,000 ongoing structural deficit, focus of an in-depth review by a County/Library work group this year. Provisions are consistent with the work group's recommendations on allocating County funds to address the imbalance for the short-term, while the Library works to develop a longer term funding strategy. Administrator Mareane noted that philanthropic support of the Library is already very strong and that the State provides only 3% of the (or \$109,000) of the Library's \$3 million budget. There was also discussion of funds for security at the Library, in light of recent incidents in and around the Library. Director Susan Currie called it a challenging, complicated issue, and said she has contracted for additional security coverage and will be over budget in that area for the current year.

For TCAT, the Recommended Budget includes \$680,000 in new Mortgage Tax revenue directly to TCAT to provide a source of new, sustainable revenue for address capital and operating needs, in addition to partner contributions by the County, City of Ithaca, and Cornell University. A fraction of the expected \$800,000 in revenue will be retained by the County to help support its \$940,000 sponsor contribution.

The budget recommends partial funding (\$24,565) for a Personnel Assistant position to handle increased workload related to expanded responsibilities for the department and to take initial steps toward succession planning in a small department where three-quarters of current staff are expected to retire within the next five years. The Administrator also recommends \$15,000 in over-target spending for Soil and Water to strengthen activity in the district's agriculture program. That agency has reduced its seven-member staff by 2.5 positions through refining its operations.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until October 10. All Expanded Budget sessions begin at 5:30 p.m. at Legislature Chambers in the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street (Second Floor).

The 2014 Recommended 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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