



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Review Continues Toward 2017 County Budget

Beginning their final week of the presentation phase of their review, Legislators acting as an Expanded Budget Committee tonight heard from seven more departments and agencies, as they continue to review County Administrator Joe Mareane's recommended 2017 budget.

Presenting tonight were the Office of Human Rights, the Probation and Community Justice, and Youth Services Departments, the County Attorney, Rural Library Services, Cooperative Extension, and The History Center.

Highlights from tonight's presentations:

Human Rights Director Karen Baer said her organization's major goal for 2017 is to engage in a meaningful and public conversation with the Legislature and community stakeholders that focuses on the reestablishment of local enforcement powers for the Office of Human Rights. Such enforcement powers could come from restoration of the Memorandum of Understanding with the New York State Division of Human Rights, which lapsed several years ago, or possibly through an enhanced local Human Rights Law that would provide the jurisdiction to investigate, adjudicate, and enforce local violations of that law. Legislature Chair Michael Lane said that it's "very important" to be talking with the State about restoring the MOU. Director Baer noted that both her over-target budget requests—nearly \$15,000 in recommended use of rollover funds for training for enforcement and outreach staff, and \$1,500 for a Westlaw database subscription (not included in the budget)—presume the future restoration of local enforcement powers, and that she would like to focus in the year ahead on capacity building for her staff.

Recent Federal changes in personnel requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act came up several times during tonight's budget discussions. The new regulations limit "exempt" employees to those earning at least \$47,460 a year, with those earning less than that limited to 40 hours per week, or paid overtime for work beyond that. That causes cost pressures for some youth programs, noted Youth Services Director Amie Hendrix, due to the pattern of the work, and is in part responsible for the request for a 5.9% increase from the Recreation Partnership, characterized as a maintenance-of-effort request. For the County, that just over \$2,500 increase (not recommended by the administrator) is 3.9% greater than the 2% increase provided County agencies in the Recommended Budget.

Cooperative Extension also sought over-target funding for a nearly \$8,000 salary adjustment for four positions (not included in the administrator's budget), so that they could remain exempt under FLSA, among a number of positions being reconfigured there to comply with the new regulation. Director Ken Schlather reflected that he has some concern about the potential change in culture that the new work pattern may cause in his organization. Several one-time funding requests for Extension are included in the Recommended Budget—among them, \$40,000 for the third year of a three-year coordination of a college and career readiness program; \$13,500 for the second year of a staff development program; and \$19,500 to add staff support for Youth Development, and Family and Community Development programs.

The Expanded Budget Committee has recessed until Thursday, September 29. All Expanded Budget sessions begin at 5:30 p.m., and are held at Legislature Chambers in the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street (Second Floor), Ithaca.

The 2017 Recommended Budget, with schedules and other budget-related information, is posted at the budget page of the County web site at www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2017budget.

Contact: Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee, 592-3206; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.

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