



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Budget Presentation Summary – Update as of September 23, 2019

County Legislators, acting as an Expanded Budget Committee, wrap up the presentation phase of 2020 budget review this week, examining County Administrator Jason Molino's 2020 Recommended Budget.

So far, Legislators have heard from the following departments and agencies:

- September 5: Administrator Molino on the Capital Plan; Department of Recycling and Materials Management; Department of Planning and Sustainability.
- September 9: Weights and Measures; County Attorney; County Historian; Facilities; Highway; Sheriff's Office/Jail; Board of Elections; Office for the Aging.
- September 10: County Clerk; Tompkins County Area Development; Finance; Legislature/Clerk; Emergency Response; Tompkins Community Action.
- September 12: Assessment; Human Resources; Mental Health; Public Health; The History Center; Information Technology; Soil and Water Conservation District; SPCA/Animal Control.

The administrator's \$191.8 million Recommended Budget would increase the County's property tax levy by 2.76%, (in line with the Legislature's 2020 levy goal) and would decrease the County tax rate for the sixth consecutive year, due to a continued substantial increase in the county's tax base. A \$2 increase in the County's Solid Waste Annual Fee is also recommended. Under the Recommended Budget, the County property tax bill (including the solid waste fee) for the owner of a median-valued \$190,000 home would increase by \$15.

A few highlights from presentations so far:

FACILITIES:

In light of growth in the County's capital program over the next several years, the department's base budget includes addition of an Associate Civil Engineer position to meet the need to provide technical, engineering, and construction management support.

HIGHWAY:

As well as over-target funding requests for supervisor pickup trucks and a road side mower in line with the department's long-range equipment replacement plan, the department seeks \$44,000 in over target funding, recommended by the County Administrator, to continue the Public Works Apprenticeship program, begun in 2019 in collaboration with the City and Town of Ithaca.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE/JAIL:

Two additional deputies have been added to the Sheriff's roster in the recommended budget, one of those positions funded by reductions in other lines, such as overtime, equipment, and jail board-outs.

The recommended budget also includes funding to relocate a restructured STOP-DWI program to the Sheriff's Office.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

The recommended budget includes more than \$30,000 to support staffing needs related to Early Voting and extended hours for primary and general elections in 2020, as well as over \$160,000 in one time funding to support the demands of the 2020 election season.

LEGISLATURE/CLERK:

The recommended budget includes addition of a new position to aid in succession planning, where two members of the Legislature's three-member clerks' staff are expected to retire within the next two to four years. Position cost (~\$90,000 for salary and fringe benefits) is partially funded by department rollover funds.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

Over-target requests supported by the recommended budget include one-time funding for a Project Manager position and a nearly \$40,000 increase in ongoing target funding to support an increase in service contract expense.

SOIL AND WATER:

The County Administrator's budget does not include \$130,000 requested for a Water Resource Engineer and \$35,000 requested for an Agricultural Conservation Technician/Outreach Coordinator. District Manager Jon Negley told Legislators the engineer position would provide much-needed engineering capacity for the district. The need to hire private engineers and wait for the required certifications, slows down projects by months, in the context of our area's limited construction seasons.

The Expanded Budget Committee presentations are scheduled tonight, September 23 and Tuesday, September 24.

The 2020 Recommended Budget, along with schedules and other budget-related information (including presentation documents from departments and agencies) is posted on the budget page of the County web site at www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2020budget.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee, 844-8440; County Administrator Jason Molino, 274-5551.

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