



Inclusion Through Diversity

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Budget Presentation Summary – Update as of September 27, 2019

County Legislators, acting as an Expanded Budget Committee, have now wrapped up the presentation phase of 2020 budget review, as they examine County Administrator Jason Molino's 2020 Recommended Budget.

In two sessions this week, Legislators heard from the following departments and agencies:

- September 23: Youth Services; Office of Human Rights; Tompkins County Public Library; Rural Libraries; Department of Social Services; Airport; Cooperative Extension; Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit; Transportation Planning.
- September 24: District Attorney; Assigned Counsel; Probation and Community Justice; Veterans Services; Workforce NY Career Center; Workforce Development Board; Human Services Coalition and agencies; County Administration.

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.

Highlights from this week's presentations:

SOCIAL SERVICES:

Among over-target requests, which are included in the Recommended Budget, \$8,300 in one-time money for a security risk assessment of the Human Services Building and \$42,000 (one-time) to supplement the Solutions to End Homelessness program, to enable it to serve about nine additional households. Commissioner Kit Kephart said the "extreme low income" housing crisis is among the major influences on her department's budget.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:

The agency submitted six over-target requests, all for one-time money. Three were not recommended by the administrator: \$18,000 to help support the agency's strategic planning process; \$18,000 to transition the Urban Outreach Program to a new funding model; and \$20,000 to begin to develop a local Food System Plan.

TOMPKINS CONSOLIDATED AREA TRANSIT:

TCAT General Manager Scot Vanderpool said that paramount among his system budget's major influences is its great need for a new and larger facility.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

The District Attorney, Assigned Counsel, and Probation all referenced New York State's sweeping criminal justice reform and bail reform in 2020. D.A. Matt Van Houten's over-target requests, all included in the Recommended Budget, include more than \$78,000 in target funding to support an additional paralegal and more than \$83,000 for an additional confidential investigator, to enable his department to meet the stringent new discovery requirements of criminal justice reform. "Philosophically, I agree with this. Practically, it's an administrative nightmare," Van Houten said.

ASSIGNED COUNSEL:

Supervising Attorney Lance Salisbury said, "2020 is going to be one of the most exciting and dynamic years for our office in our history." Among major influences identified are implementation of the Hurrell Haring statewide expansion contract with the State (\$2.5 million in grant funding over the next five years); implementation of the Hurrell Haring Contract with Schuyler County; effects of having a third county court judge; as well as NYS criminal justice reform. Included in the Recommended Budget are over-target requests to increase the Supervising Attorney position to full-time (over \$82,000 to fund the increase until Hurrell Haring funds support for it kicks in in 2021) and a mandated Data Collector position, to be funded by Hurrell Haring.

PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE:

The Probation budget eliminates a half-time Senior Probation Officer position that had been added to in 2019 as a placeholder in anticipation of increased demand from the impact of Raise the Age legislation—that position at present found not to have been needed. Probation Director Pat Buechel said questions still remain regarding implementation aspects of NYS Bail Reform, which may affect pretrial program staffing, software expense, and data tracking requirements.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD.

Included in the Recommended Budget is more than \$53,000 in over-target funding to create a full-time Deputy Director position, abolishing the half-time position of Administrative Coordinator.

HUMAN SERVICES COALITION AND AGENCIES:

The administrator's budget includes \$14,000 in additional target funding to support a rent increase for the Coalition's move of its headquarters to TC3's Tioga Place building but does not include \$50,000 in one-time funding to support a Landlord Liaison position. Questioned by legislators, Administrator Molino said he thinks the concept is a good one but needs to be further developed. Among agency requests not included in the Recommended Budget: \$18,000 in one-time funding for Endeavor House case management (through OAR), \$10,000 (one-time) to partially support an operations position at Southside Community Center; and \$50,000 in target funding to support Continuum of Care efforts to end homelessness.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION:

Among aspects of the County Administration budget, recommended creation of a Chief Equity and Diversity Officer for the County, to be housed in County Administration (more than \$133,000 in target funding for salary and fringe.) The position, as recommended by the employee group examining diversity and inclusion issues related to findings from the County's 2018 Climate Survey, would be focused on building trust within the organization and in the community, and providing equal access for all employees and residents. Legislators Mike Sigler and Dan Klein both expressed some initial concern regarding further top-level expansion of the County Administration team.

The Expanded Budget Committee will begin voting October 3rd to recommend changes to the County Administrator's Budget

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

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