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**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
Jason Molino

**DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS**  
Lisa Holmes and Amie Hendrix

*Inclusion Through  
Diversity*

*"Promoting excellence in County operations while respecting the needs of the people we serve."*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Highlights of the **October 14th, 2020** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature Expanded Budget Committee**

The expanded Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee of the Tompkins County Legislature met to review the proposed 2021 budgets from the County's planning, energy and environmental quality departments and supported agencies. Due to financial impacts from COVID-19, County departments were required to submit budgets that reflect a 12% reduction.

#### **Department of Planning & Sustainability, Tourism Program**

The Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability presented its \$919,000, recommended budget for 2021 representing just under 10 full time equivalent employees. The budget includes a shift of GIS (Geographical Information System) staff to Information Technology Services as part of a proposed organization-wide GIS consolidation effort.

An anticipated over target request to study rural broadband needs in Tompkins County was discussed. Legislator Anna Kelles (D-Ithaca) plans to submit the over target request. A planner from the department would work with the Tompkins County Council of Governments to involve all municipalities in the study process.

The recommended Tourism Program budget, estimated at \$1.5 million, was presented by the department. Tourism Program Director Nick Helmholtz reported that hotel occupancy has been down in 2020 due to the pandemic and that hotel rates have also decreased, and are expected to continue to stay down throughout 2021 as the economy recovers. The program plans to focus resources on marketing and sales in order to maintain more stable room tax revenues for partners that rely on it, avoiding depletion of fund balances.

The full presentation from the Planning and Sustainability Department and Tourism Program can be viewed here:  
<https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigQ?t=766>

#### **Workforce Development Board and Tompkins Workforce New York**

Natalie Branosky, Director of the Workforce Development Board presented the \$617,000 recommended 2021 budget. The board has 25 members from the community, is 51% private sector led, and includes representatives from private employers, nonprofit agencies, educational institutions, and unions. The budget includes an over target request to support a Youth Services Associate position, as unemployment was reported as disproportionately impacting young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Branosky reported that in 2020 the Board will have administered over \$1 million in federal, state, and local funds for workforce services, and that the local unemployment rate is hovering between 9-10%, with local closings, furloughs, and layoffs ongoing. Branosky additionally cited the issues of childcare, transportation, housing and broadband as having impacts on the local workforce.

The full presentation from the Workforce Development Board can be viewed here:  
<https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigQ?t=2786>

Tompkins Workforce New York – including the local Career Center and Office of Employment and Training presented their \$1.1 million budget, which included a 21% reduction due to the closing out of two sizable grant-funded programs. Throughout the pandemic career center services have experienced a loss of 50% of staff due to the New York State Department of Labor pulling staff to provide support for unemployment insurance claims. The department has adapted and continued its ability to support jobseekers with new requirements in the workforce system.

The full presentation from Tompkins Workforce New York can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigo?t=3465>

### **Soil and Water District**

The Tompkins County Soil and Water District presented their \$336,000 budget supported by the County, adding that they are expecting over \$3.7 million in grant and program expenses for 2021. Director John Negley shared details on how COVID-19 slowed the implementation of some projects in 2020 and that the district is re-strategizing moving forward anticipating state and federal budget cuts.

The full presentation from the Soil and Water District can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigo?t=4273>

### **Cornell Cooperative Extension**

Cornell Cooperative Extension shared their recommended agency budget and detailed how the organization adapted to continue to meet community needs and offer programming during COVID-19, with specific detail on supporting the local food system and the food systems plan supported by the County.

The full presentation from Cooperative Extension can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigo?t=5760>

### **Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD)**

TCAD President Heather McDaniel presented details of the \$225,000 portion of their budget supported by Tompkins County, representing 24% of their total funding. TCAD is also supported by fees for services and other local investors. McDaniel reported that local development continues to be going strongly, with many investors and developers looking at Tompkins County as a good long-term investment. McDaniel also highlighted core programs of TCAD, including direct services to businesses in the County.

The full presentation from TCAD can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigo?t=7942>

### **History Center and Tompkins Center for History and Culture**

History Center Executive Director Ben Sandberg presented the recommended 2021 History Center budget of \$46k, (reflecting a new arrangement with the County), the impact of COVID-19 on the Center, and successes seen prior to COVID-19 including a 75% increase in visitation at the Center following a successful move to the new Tompkins Center for History and Culture.

County Administrator Jason Molino presented a proposal that Sandberg and the History Center take on a more active operating arrangement for the Tompkins Center for History and Culture facility.

The Tompkins County Historian also presented their recommended budget.

The full presentation from The History Center can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigo?t=9267>

### **Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) / Transportation Planning**

TCAT Executive Director Scot Vanderpool presented the recommended \$980,000 underwriter share from Tompkins County and the transit system's overall budget. Vanderpool shared details on the strategic planning process being undertaken by the system and how the pandemic has impacted ridership and operations

The full presentation from Transportation Agencies can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/SnltY5fHigo?t=12063>

Past 2021 budget presentations and discussion can be viewed on the County's [YouTube page](#).

The County's budget process and documents can be found on the County Administration [Website](#).

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