

Highlights of the September 30, 2021 meeting of the Expanded Budget Committee of the Tompkins County Legislature

Human Services Coalition Presents Recommended 2022 Coalition and Agencies Budgets

Director of Community Services John Mazzello and Executive Director Kathy Schlather presented the \$1.4 million recommended budget, which supports several not-for-profit agencies who apply for funding through the annual Human Services Coalition application process. The Coalition involves local community members in the review process.

Mazzello outlined several major influences in local agency budgets, including that there are new directors at 7 of the 19 agencies that applied for funding through the coalition, client needs changing and being impacted by COVID-19, and the difficulty for agencies filling staff and volunteer positions. Increased client needs outlined included that many people are seeking benefit and financial assistance for the first time, families and individuals having capacity to pay bills, and the need to meet clients where they are and approach support in new and more direct ways.

Recommended over-target requests were presented to support local organizations, including several to assist individuals reentering from incarceration and access to childcare, food, and housing. A request was also made for \$36,000 to restore funding to all agencies that had been decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional \$20,00 was requested from American Rescue Plan Act funds for a flexible pool of funding that would be made available for agencies with pressing needs or opportunities. A \$110,000 request for target funding was also included to support the College Initiative Upstate program, which helps formerly incarcerated individuals receive a college degree.

Two over-target requests that were not recommended in the 2022 budget were a program to support the business case and back-office support for group and in-home childcare programs and to support the LawNY Early Intervention Homeless Prevention program providing case management to individuals in eviction proceedings or at risk of eviction proceedings. Legislator Shawna Black (D-Ithaca) indicated that she would be submitting an amendment to continue to support the childcare business program. Following an inquiry into the LawNY program by Legislator Black, program director Keith McCafferty explained that the project anticipates an increase in evictions in 2022 and this program would stop some evictions up-stream helping to avoid issues and further evictions. Interim County Administrator Lisa Holmes clarified that the reason these requests were not recommended is because they had been funded previously as three-year programs and those three years have concluded.

Schlather presented the Coalition's organizational \$519,000 budget, including two over-target requests to support the positions of a Data Specialist and Housing Specialist. As the needs and use for data increase, Schlather indicated it would be helpful for the Coalition to track data and work more closely with agencies on their data management and goals. Schlather explained major influences on the organization, including the increased work related to the COVID-19 response and the increase in calls to the 2-1-1 information line (will take in 26,000+ calls in 2021 connecting people with information and services).

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Department Director Lisa Monroe presented the office's \$2.57 million budget. Monroe highlighted the breakdown of services offered by the office and the funding streams that support those services. All programs are funded in part by federal or state funding, Monroe reported 23 different funding streams managed by the office. Legislator McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) inquired about the Northside/Southside program (now called the Mosaic program), Monroe stated that they are working with community partners to determine what the program should look like, and who should be encompassed under the program.



Tompkins County Health Department

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa presented the Health Department's recommended \$14.7 million budget. Kruppa outlined that this is generally a maintenance of effort budget that includes several large passthroughs related to the pandemic response, but that there are also several over-target requests. The budget recommends 68 full time positions, up from 63 in 2021

and 66 in 2020.

An over-target request to continue the Public Health Ambassador / Community Health Workers program for \$134,000 was detailed. Kruppa shared that the program has been successful connecting with harder to reach and marginalized communities during the pandemic. Additional over-target requests were shared to support environmental health programming including core services and water resources, Kruppa stated that as the State has increased regulations the existing staffing is unable to keep up with the needs. An additional request to build a water resources and quality database with the Community Science Institute is also included in the over-target requests.

Increased hours for administrative support are being requested as the Public and Mental Health departments continue their merger. The merger is designed in-part to increase capacity for services. Funds to support more public and mental health staff integration are also being requested.

The maternal child health program from the Health Department is being relaunched, with the department planning to expand the program and offer services to all new moms in Tompkins County.

Rollover funds are being recommended to support \$152,000 in vehicle fleet replacements, which would purchase four electric vehicles making the Health Department's fleet 100% electrified.



Tompkins County Mental Health

Frank Kruppa also serves as the Tompkins County Mental Health Commissioner and presented the department's recommended 2022 budget of \$13.5 million, of which \$11.3 million is made up of revenues the department receives for its services. The budget recommends 57 full time equivalent employees, up from 54 in 2021.



Around \$700,000 of over-target requests were made, including the position of Wellness Court Resource Coordinator, put in as one-time funding in hopes that the Office of Court Administration will fund that position in the future, and a Wellness Court Case Manager requested by Wellness Court Judge Scott Miller to decrease case management load of existing staff. A target budget request seeks \$10,000 to increase available pay for the Mental Health Crisis Team beyond what the department has included in their larger target budget. \$250,000 is being sought for the Alcohol and Drug Council of Tompkins County to support the start-up of their open access treatment center, the funds support staffing to build capacity at the center and would be a decreasing contribution over three years. The department is also recommending funding for a peer support program for those in recovery and clinical training related to stressors of COVID-19. Kruppa outlined a \$200,000 one-time request to support REACH Medical following their incursion of a deficit over the past

year administering COVID-19 outreach and vaccinations for those who are experiencing homelessness or other pressing needs. Most of the requests were recommended to be funded from available American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Kruppa and Legislator Deborah Dawson (D-Lansing) discussed the one-time requests from third party organizations through this budget and that they are related to one-time costs and that other funding sources are being sought to ensure long-term sustainability of organizations and programming.

Tompkins County Youth Services & Recreation Partnership

Department Director Kate Shanks Booth and Administrative Assistant Theresa Albert presented the department's \$1.5 million budget. The department's revenue of \$362,000 comes from several grants and New York State aid. The department plans to retain four full-time staff members.

Over-target requests presented included funding for programs that include the runaway and homeless youth support system, commercial sexual exploitation of children program (CSEC) support, and support for partner agencies that were cut through the 2021 budget reductions in response to the pandemic. Shanks Booth reported that the CSEC program has served over 30 youth in Tompkins County and connected them with supportive services, and that over 300 professionals in Tompkins County have been trained on the program and issues.

The Youth Recreation Partnership budget was also presented by Shanks Booth totaling \$313,516 which includes support from other partner municipalities. Youth recreation programming across Tompkins County is supported through this funding.

Tompkins Community Action

Agency Executive Director Danielle Harrington presented her recommended budget supported by the County totaling \$257,357, of which \$30,918 is requested to restore base funding to pre-pandemic levels. The funds are used to receive a federal match for programming.

Tompkins Community Action provides Housing Services, Energy Services and other programs and supports for low-income individuals in Tompkins County.

Tompkins County Animal Control / SPCA

Executive Director of the SPCA of Tompkins County, Jim Boudreau presented the \$32,726 budget to support the program for rabies vaccinations of cats and spay/neuter surgeries for animals owned by individuals who are low-income. Legislator Anne Koreman (D-Ulysses) thanked the SPCA for their programs and reminded the community of the importance of getting cats spayed and neutered.

For more information on the previous budget presentations, visit:

<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/news/highlights-september-14-2021-meeting-expanded-budget-committee-tompkins-county-legislature>