

Budget and Capital Committee
April 9, 2007
3:30 p.m.
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Approved 4-23-07

Present: R. Booth, M. Hattery (arrived at 3:36 p.m.), N. Shinagawa, K. Herrera (excused at 4:05 p.m.)
Excused: M. Koplinka-Loehr
Staff: N. Jayne, M. Lynch, County Administration; D. Squires, Finance; P. Carey, DSS, L. Holmes, COFA; M. Pottorff, Legislature Office
Guests: N. Fawcett: Library Board of Trustees

1. Called to Order

Mr. Booth, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

2. Opportunity for Public Comment

No one from the public appeared to provide comments.

3. Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Chair's Report

Mr. Booth had no report.

5. Finance Director's Report

Mr. Squires reported he has been working with auditors to provide needed documentation to assist with the audit process. He reported a good news item -- at the end of 2006, the Education of Preschool Handicapped Children's Program was notified that an additional State aid claim had been authorized which will result in an increase of approximately \$700,000 in the Fund Balance.

6. County Administrator's Report

Mr. Whicher was on vacation and not in attendance. Staff from Administration had no report.

Mr. Hattery arrived at 3:36 p.m.

7. Public Information Officer's Report

Ms. Lynch said she is continuing to work on a final report from the community budget forums.

**8. RESOLUTION NO. – APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND – TERMINAL PAY
– DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE**

It was MOVED by Ms. Herrera, seconded by Mr. Shinagawa, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the following resolution and submit to the full Legislature pending action by the Public Safety Committee:

WHEREAS, the Department of Probation and Community Justice had a Probation Officer retire effective March 3, 2007, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for terminal pay from the Contingent Fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Public Safety and Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized and directed to make the following budget appropriation:

FROM:	A1990.54440	Contingent Fund	\$4,973
TO:	A3142.51000585	Probation Officer	\$3,578
	A3142.58800	Fringes	\$1,395

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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9. County Budget Process - Public Library

Ms. Jayne said she received a phone call from Legislator Sigler regarding the Library wanting to be treated more like a County department during the budget process. She said this has been done with some of the bigger agencies in the past and explained what this would involve. She said this would include having the County giving to the Library an annual target and otherwise treat it as a County department is treated and having the Library propose a budget in a way similar to County departments. This procedure would provide Library staff with access to the budget database and allow them to submit a budget on a line-by-line basis. Ms. Jayne said the larger issue is a desire by the Library to include salary adjustments in the Library's fiscal target. For example, if County departments were granted three percent salary increases, the Library's salary line would increase by this amount as well.

The Committee asked how the County presently handles entities such as Tompkins Cortland Community College and TCAT, Inc. Ms. Jayne said neither those entities, nor any other agencies, receive a COLA or automatic increase for salaries.

Mr. Fawcett, member of the Library Board of Trustees, said the majority of the Library's budget is comprised of personnel expenses and because the salary line has always stood out above the target it has made it appear as though the Library's needs are greater in comparison to County departments. He said this regularly proposed action would go a long way toward focusing the real questions and issues on things that are qualitative issues.

The question was raised regarding how this proposal would affect the County's budget would be if this request was granted. Ms. Jayne said the financial impact to the County of this action would be approximately \$80,000.

Additional issues raised by the Committee included the following: A) the County is not involved in any of the collective bargaining negotiations for the Library; the increase negotiated for the Library could be higher than the County's; B) the Library's fringe rate is currently 44 percent; C) the proposal may push the County toward becoming responsible for paying cost-of-living increases and contracting for not-for-profit services; and D) the Fiscal Policy is ambiguous regarding how agencies are to be dealt with; the policy has been applied in some circumstances to some non-governmental entities but not all.

The Committee took no action. The Committee agreed to proceed cautiously in looking further at this request. A request was made that Ms. Jayne provide the Committee with language of the Fiscal Policy that pertains to agencies and to also provide the Committee with an example of what the impact would have been over the last few years if this proposal had been implemented in previous years.

10. Capital/Debt Report

Ms. Jayne distributed a copy of a draft ten-year capital and debt program schedule, which provides cost information regarding which projects the County has already committed itself to through the Capital Program and which items are potential/discretionary items. Ms. Jayne noted that anticipated peaks in the 20-year capital program are likely to occur in 2008 and 2013.

Ms. Herrera was excused at 4:05 p.m.

11. Budget Retreat

Ms. Jayne distributed a proposed agenda for the April 26th budget retreat. She noted that exercises to be conducted at the retreat will be similar to those used during the community budget forums. She said Legislators will receive budget projections for 2008 and 2009. These will be based on salary and fringe adjustments as well as items that appeared to be ongoing in the 2007 budget but were funded only as one-time items. The projections will not include any predictions for mandates. She said she is awaiting word from the Finance Director regarding what Fund Balance monies may be available to stabilize the tax rate.

Mr. Booth asked that staff provide information regarding what assumptions were used to develop the projections.

12. Revenue Options/Savings

No new information was presented on revenue options/savings.

13. Room Occupancy Tax

Mr. Hattery requested information regarding the Room Occupancy Tax. He would like to look into the possibility of taking a portion of funds generated by the Occupancy Tax and committing it towards economic development. He requested this item be added to the next agenda for discussion and that the following be provided/done in advance of that meeting:

History of Room Tax revenues;
Representatives of the tourism industry should be notified this is a topic of discussion; and
History of the Room Tax increases.

14. Budget Process Flow Chart

For information only, Ms. Jayne distributed copies of a budget process flow chart developed by Paula Younger, Deputy County Administrator.

15. Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2007

It was MOVED by Mr. Booth, seconded by Mr. Shinagawa, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of March 26, 2007 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

16. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.