



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **July 20, 2010** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Awards Contracts for Public Safety Dispatch/Data System

The Legislature awarded contracts to implement a new integrated public safety voice and data system, as the final phase of the County's Public Safety Communications capital project. The vote was unanimous, with Legislator Dooley Kiefer excused.

The project will replace the County's existing computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, implement mobile data applications for emergency responders, and activate other voice and data components to achieve full integration through a standardized multi-agency records management system. Although the total maximum project cost is \$1.45 million, \$700,00 remaining in the public safety communications capital budget and \$150,000 expected in Homeland Security grant funding will offset the cost. As a next step, the Legislature will be asked to approve \$600,000 in bonding to support the project. Director of Emergency Response Lee Shurtleff called the system a 20-year investment and characterized the coordinated approach as "the best value" for that investment.

The Legislature's action awards Spillman Technologies, Inc., of Salt Lake City, UT, the primary project contract for software and professional services, a firm Information Technology Services Director Greg Potter described as a stable, privately held company which is one of the best software companies his department has seen." Apart from the capital cost, the Legislature in its action also approved a six-year maintenance financing agreement, at 0% interest, negotiated with the vendor. After a first-year payment of \$25,000, the agreement holds ongoing maintenance expense steady at just over \$135,000 per year for the following five years.

Contact: Lee Shurtleff, Director of Emergency Response, 257-3888; Nathan Shinagawa, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 280-7557.

Legislature Accepts Grant to Support Planning Assistance Related to Gas Drilling

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, accepted a \$50,000 grant from the Park Foundation to partially support a one-year planner position to provide technical assistance to municipalities aimed at reducing impacts of natural gas drilling. (Legislator Dooley Kiefer was excused.) Housed in the County Planning Department, the position will provide direct assistance to local governments in implementing best practices to address the impact of gas drilling activities.

Legislators agreed that now is the time to act to prepare, but several expressed concern about timing, in light of the County's budget constraints, and that about \$30,000 (from Planning Department rollover funds) would be required, split over two budget years, to supplement the grant funding. Legislator Peter Stein expressed hope that the Tompkins County Council of Governments would address the issues and determine how to share costs in a way that will not overburden the County.

Planning Committee chair Pam Mackesey stated, "This is not something we can put off until our county economy improves—this knows no boundaries in terms of county or municipal lines." Legislator Jim Dennis called the expense "a cost of doing business in Tompkins County next year," saying the program must exist to protect the county's future.

Contact: Pamela Mackesey, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 273-6203

Legislature Expresses Support for Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Personnel

Legislators were unanimous in approving a resolution support of law enforcement and emergency services personnel throughout Tompkins County, and especially Sergeant Bryan Bangs of the Ithaca Police Department. Many legislators thanked their colleague, City of Ithaca legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, for bringing the measure forward. Following the July 10 arson attack on Sergeant Bangs, the resolution expresses thanks “that Sergeant Bangs is alive and that his family was not physically harmed,” expresses “deep disappointment, concern, and abhorrence at such a cowardly attack on one of our respected law enforcement personnel and about such acts of violence in Tompkins County,” and “support(s) full prosecution” of those found responsible. The action “offers(s) any resources necessary to aid in the full investigation of this criminal act against him and his family, and the prosecution of those found to be responsible,” voices support for all law enforcement and emergency services personnel “for the stellar work they do, especially at this time of heightened concern for their safety,” and “condemns any acts of violence against law enforcement and emergency services personnel.” It calls upon all residents of Tompkins County to support and respect their work and to work together to build more cordial relationship involving citizens, law enforcement, and emergency services personnel.

Contact: Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, 277-5104; Nathan Shinagawa, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 280-7557.

Legislature Awards Tax-Exempt Bonds for Cayuga Medical Center Improvements

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, approved issuance of up to \$16.5 million in tax-exempt revenue bonds by the Tompkins County Development Corporation to Cayuga Medical Center to support financing of medical equipment; expansion to CMC’s Island Health and Fitness Center, and renovations to its cardiology unit and pain management and sleep disorders clinics. The vote was unanimous, with Legislator Dooley Kiefer excused.

The bonds will be the first approved since the Tompkins County Development Corporation was established in conjunction with the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency. The bonds, which carry no indebtedness for the County, exempt bond interest payments from federal income tax, as did IDA-issued civic facility revenue bonds before state authorization for that type of financing lapsed a couple of years ago.

Contact: Pamela Mackesey, Chair, Planning , Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 273-6203.

Capital Funds Allocated to Protect Dryden Natural Area

The Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Dooley Kiefer was excused) allocated \$25,000 allocation from the County’s Capital Reserve Fund for Natural Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection toward support of the Finger Lakes Land Trust’s acquisition of a 170-acre parcel on Dryden’s Irish Settlement Road. The land, known as the Berntsson-Millier property, is located in a Natural Features Focus Area, as described in the County’s Comprehensive Plan and within the New York State Open Space Plan’s Emerald Necklace Greenbelt; is identified as a priority protection area in the County’s Conservation Plan; contains part of the Slaterville Wildflower Preserve, 20 acres of wetlands, and more than 6,000 feet of frontage on Six Mile Creek.

Contact: Pamela Mackesey, Chair, Planning , Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 273-6203.

Matt Lowe Recognized as Distinguished Youth

Dryden High School student Matt Lowe is Tompkins County Distinguished Youth for July. Nominated by Katie Levedahl, Manager of Education at the Sciencenter, and Dryden High School earth science teacher Travis Crocker, Matt was recognized for his contributions and service to Tompkins County and his commitment to sustainability. As part of the Sciencenter’s ScienceWorks program, he led development the countywide Green Business Challenge, challenging businesses to reduce carbon emissions by at least 10%. Matt also founded Dryden High School’s Sustainability Club and organized a local event as part of the “350 International Day of Climate Action.” Matt is described as a “mature, responsible, highly motivated and enthusiastic young man” respected by both his peers and adults. The Distinguished Youth Award is cosponsored by A&B Awards and Engraving, Bangs Ambulance Service, Purity Ice Cream, and Cayuga Radio Group.

Contact: Legislature Office, 274-5434.

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