



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **August 2, 2011** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Public Hearing on Road Preservation Law Scheduled August 16

The Legislature, without dissent, authorized a public hearing on the County's proposed Road Preservation Law. The hearing will take place on August 16, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at Legislative Chambers of the County Courthouse, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca. The hearing will take public comment on the proposed amendment to the County Code, which would regulate certain "high intensity, high frequency" truck traffic from temporary projects—such as, but not limited to gas drilling—which carry the potential to cause serious damage to county roads. The proposed law has been revised since an initial public hearing was held at the beginning of this year, revisions based on comment received at that first hearing and at several public information sessions thereafter, sponsored by the Legislature's Government Operations and Facilities and Infrastructure Committees.

Some legislators had questions about the current frequency and weight limits contained in the revised proposal, which would trigger the permitting process. Such traffic is defined as "traffic to and from a project site that generates more than 1,000 truck trips, involving a truck with a gross weight of 30 tons or more (truck and load combined)." Highway manager Bill Sczesny told legislators the law would "give us some teeth to go after these unusual areas of traffic...to get companies to pay for damage that they've done."

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 844-8313 or 844-8440; Carol Chock, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 273-9007.

Legislature Accepts Four Criminal Justice Grants

The Legislature, without dissent, accepted four criminal justice grants. The Sheriff's Office was awarded two grants under the New York State Byrne JAG Equipment Grant program, \$24,243 for jail video conferencing equipment and \$13,100 for digital surveillance equipment. The Sheriff's Office also received \$59,448 from the Department of Homeland Security for replacement mobile computers and equipment. Public Safety Chair Peter Stein and Legislator Brian Robison both noted that the equipment grants for functions such as jail conferencing, offer ways in which technology can be used to save money in staff costs.

Legislators also approved a nearly \$21,097 grant from the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services to the Probation Department and District Attorney's Office to help offset costs of implementing Leandra's Law and monitoring of ignition interlock devices.

Contact: Peter Stein, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 266-7579; Sheriff Ken Lansing, 257-1345; Probation Director Patricia Buechel, 274-5380.

Legislature Approves Appropriation of 2010 Rollover Funds

The Legislature appropriated \$142,534 in certified unspent funds (known as "rollover") for five departments from 2010 to departmental accounts for use in the current year's budget. Among the appropriations is more than \$130,000 for the County Clerk's Office, which Legislator Mike Lane noted will, along with grant funding, enable the office to move records storage out of the Old Library and relocate the records-scanning operation to Challenge Industries, avoiding the cost of building a half-million-dollar county records center.

Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 387-4058.

Among other business, the Legislature

- Adopted the County Compliance Program for Tompkins County Government. In February, the Legislature approved the steps necessary to develop the formal compliance program, which integrates legal and internal compliance efforts throughout county government to mitigate risk, assure quality, and improve internal controls and monitoring systems, as needed. Legislators thanked Deputy County Administrator Paula Younger, who serves as the County’s Corporate Compliance Officer, for leading the effort that developed the comprehensive program over the past five months. The Legislature also adopted a whistleblower policy that supports the County’s compliance program and its Code of Ethics.

- Heard and received a written statement from the Community Leaders of Color, expressing “deep disappointment” at the Legislature’s failure to pass a resolution in support of continued independent status of Cornell’s Africana Studies and Research Center. The measure would have asked that Cornell administrators consider implications making the Center part of the College of Arts and Sciences, and to delay the restructuring plan to permit a “meaningful, transparent, and productive dialogue.”

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