



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **March 6, 2012** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Emergency Responders Thanked for Dedication in Recent Search**

The Legislature recognized emergency responders and community volunteers for their dedicated efforts during recent days in the search for 82-year-old Johanna Kirkwood, who wandered from her Lansing home and perished before searchers could find her.

Officials from the Sheriff's Office and Department of Emergency Response were invited to the Legislature meeting to accept the Legislature's thanks and recognition for the tireless efforts of their departments to organize and oversee the search, as well as of the hundreds of responders and volunteers, from throughout the community and beyond, who took part.

Legislature Chair Martha Robertson said the Legislature is deeply saddened that Mrs. Kirkwood was ill and died despite the efforts of 500 volunteer searchers to find her, and extends deep sympathies to her and her family. Robertson said, however, that the sense of community the search effort demonstrated is uplifting—"how many people drop everything they do and step up and do the right thing."

Sheriff Ken Lansing called it "quite an outpouring from the community" that was huge, and he credited the forest rangers from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation who coordinated the search and volunteer teams, as well as community businesses which donated food and support for the volunteers.

Assistant Director of Emergency Response Beth Harrington called it "a total team effort" involving nearly 650 people over three days, involving formal agencies and the community.

*Contact: Martha Robertson, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 272-0584.*

#### **Engineering Services Agreement Approved to Implement Road Preservation Law**

The Legislature, by unanimous vote authorized the County to enter into an agreement with LaBella Associates, P.C. to provide engineering and related services required to implement the County's Road Preservation Law, at a cost not to exceed \$35,000. The law, governing truck traffic that exceeds specific weight and frequency thresholds, calls for damage resulting from such high-intensity traffic be anticipated, analyzed, and repaired promptly and to appropriate engineering standards, and that a bond sufficient to support the cost of anticipated road damage may be required before the project that generate such traffic begins. LaBella was selected as the best qualified of several engineering firms that responded to the County's Request for Proposals.

LaBella will assist the County and local municipal governments wishing to participate in establishing and implementing the system to be used to administer the law, including the process of estimate potential road damage and the cost of such damage at the beginning of a project, then of calculating to the actual road damage at the end of a project. LaBella will also help develop and administer the law's permitting process.

The Legislature's action also authorizes the County Administrator to execute supplemental agreements on behalf of the County to enable project-specific work to proceed as projects covered by the law arise, with costs incurred by the permittee, or to enable other local governments to procure services under the contract at their

own expense. County Administrator Joe Mareane expects the process of contracting with LaBella will begin immediately and that permit development will begin within the next 30 days.

*Contact: Carol Chock, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 273-9007; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.*

### **Two Young Environmentalists Recognized as Distinguished Youth**

Elijah de Castro and Jonas Puryear, both of Trumansburg, were recognized as the latest Tompkins County Distinguished Youth for being active and outspoken in the community debate about hydrofracking. Legislature Chair Martha Robertson noted both young men spoke convincingly at December's public hearing at the State Theatre before hundreds of people, Jonah also testified at two of the DEC's other hearings, and Elijah has lobbied senators in Albany about his views and written to Governor Cuomo about fracking. Recognizing the young activists, Robertson stated, "Jonas and Elijah, you've learned a very important lesson at a young age: that your voice counts and you can make a difference. That is an empowering idea that we hope will stay with you through your lifetimes. You will inspire many others with your ability to articulate your views and your courage in speaking up." 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.*

### **Legislature Authorizes Application for Shared Services Grant**

The Legislature, without dissent, approved a resolution supporting the County's application for an approximately \$100,000 New York State Department of State Local Government Efficiency Grant, on behalf of the Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG), to support a feasibility study concerning the prospect for shared services to maintain local roads and bridges. The study would evaluate the County and local road system and identify areas where intermunicipal cooperation, shared services, or redistribution of responsibilities could result in a more efficient system of providing quality highway services and lower costs for road repair and maintenance of existing roads.

County Administrator Joe Mareane noted that TCCOG has long discussed the possibility of studying shared services concerning highway maintenance. "This is a collective effort and we have strong municipal support," he said.

*Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551; Carol Chock, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 273-9007.*

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