



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Highlights of the **July 3, 2012** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislature Approves TC3 Budget, Master Plan**

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, adopted the 2012-2013 operating budget for Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). No one spoke at a public hearing preceding the vote. The \$37.5 million budget includes a total sponsoring community contribution of about \$4.3 million (split between Tompkins and Cortland Counties), a 1% in sponsor contribution over the current year's budget. Tompkins' share of the sponsor contribution is \$2.7 million (63%), based on a funding formula related to the proportion of students enrolled from each county. The Cortland County Legislature has already approved the budget.

Budget Chair Jim Dennis, and other Legislators, expressed their thanks to the College, Mr. Dennis commending the ability, knowledge, and level of work of staff to prepare the budget, praising them for doing "a magnificent job" in operating the facility.'

College president Dr. Carl Haynes thanked the Legislature for its support and said the College will continue to do what it can to support our community.

Legislators, also by unanimous vote, endorsed the College's five-year Campus Master Plan, developed in cooperation with HOLT Architects, focused on meeting the College's instructional space needs, subject to State approval and funding. Costs associated with the Master Plan are estimated at approximately \$7 million, half of that funded by New York State, the remainder by the sponsoring Counties, through the TC3 Capital Chargeback Fund. The Legislature's action approves the Master Plan and authorizes its implementation, subject to approval by New York State and appropriation of the State's share of the funding.

In a third TC3-related action, the Legislature, also by unanimous vote, approved a \$150,000 transfer of College surplus funds to replace lost state aid and tuition revenue in the current year's operating budget, from lower-than-projected enrollment over the past two budget years.

*Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee, 387-4058; Dr. Carl Haynes, President, Tompkins Cortland Community College, 844-8211.*

#### **Legislature Authorizes Request for Proposals to Develop Biggs Land**

The Legislature, by unanimous vote of those present (Legislator Peter Stein was excused) authorized the County to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for private developers to lease or purchase 26 acres of vacant County land at the Biggs complex on Harris B. Dates Drive in the Town of Ithaca, to develop the parcel in a manner consistent with principles demonstrated through the County's Climate Showcase Communities grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The RFP for the County land seeks to demonstrate that the model similar to concepts used in the development of Ecovillage at Ithaca (particularly its third phase, currently under development, can be transferred to a more mainstream development option that will make this type of housing option more widely available. The RFP includes requirements for highly energy-efficient, pedestrian-oriented dwellings with transit access. Two-thirds of the site would remain as open space, with clustering of the housing units on the remainder.

Legislators spent time examining RFP provisions, especially language involving the possibility of interest arrangements, should that be determined appropriate as part of discussions with prospective developers. Many Legislators praised Planning Commissioner Ed Marx for concerning the concept and development of the complex RFP, Legislator Mike Lane calling it one of the best he has seen in his years in county government. Legislature Chair Martha Robertson remarked, "It's really going to be an exciting development, and we certainly need the housing."

*Contact: Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 257-7453; Ed Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Community Sustainability, 274-5560.*

### **Legislature Supports Nuclear Power Plan Emergency Planning Zone Expansion**

Based on a resolution filed by Legislator Dooley Kiefer, the Legislature went on record favoring changes in federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations that would expand NRC emergency planning zones and improve regulations. In light of changes in radiation science and lessons learned from Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster and elsewhere, the measure maintains that "current NRC emergency planning regulations are inadequate to sufficiently protect residents of Tompkins County." The action supports a Petition for Rulemaking currently before the NRC, to expand emergency planning and evacuation zones and strengthen emergency regulations. The comment period on issues will close July 15.

*Contact: Legislator Dooley Kiefer, 257-7453.*

### **Finance Director Squires to Retire By End of Next Year.**

County Finance Director David Squires announced his intent to retire from County government as of the end of 2013. Mr. Squires told Legislators he is announcing his plans now to provide the County adequate time to determine the appropriate qualifications and plan the search for a successor, saying he hopes the Legislature can make the selection before the end of the current Legislature term. Mr. Squires has served as Finance Director for the past 20 years. Chair Martha Robertson was one who commended Squires, saying, "You have shaped and guided this County. We are in better shape than just about anyone else around."

*Contact: Finance Director David Squires, 274-5544; Martha Robertson, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 272-0584.*

Among other business, the Legislature

- Held a public hearing on a proposed Local Law to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in Tompkins County. No one spoke at the hearing. The proposed law is intended to protect the ecology of water bodies by preventing the introduction of any aquatic invasive species (such as Hydrilla), helping to protect the environment and economy of Tompkins County. Some language revisions have been proposed since the version put to hearing was advanced, and there were questions concerning whether another hearing should be held before the Legislature acts.
- Authorized transfer and appropriation of more than \$165,000 in unspent certified rollover funds from 2011 to seven County departments to fund expenditures in the current year.
- Authorized the County Administrator to execute quitclaim deeds, upon payment in full of the bid price for ten properties acquired through foreclosure and sold at public auction on June 25, 2012.
- Approved continuation of the County's Homeownership Program through use of \$400,000 in program income funds through the federal Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program, and to contract with Better Housing for Tompkins County to continue to administer the program.
- Scheduled a public hearing for July 17, 5:30 p.m., at County Legislature Chambers, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca, on a proposed Local Law regarding changes in Article 9 of the County Charter to reflect closure of the County Health Department's Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA) and the Department's operation of a Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA).

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