



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **August 7, 2012** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Public Hearing Scheduled on Proposed Redistricting Law

The Legislature scheduled a public hearing on the proposed Local Law that would reconfigure County legislative districts, based on the 2010 Census. The vote was 11-2, with Legislators Carol Chock and Leslyn McBean-Clairborne voting no. (Legislators Kathy Luz Herrera and Pam Mackesey were excused.) The hearing will be held at the Legislature's next meeting, August 21, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at Legislature Chambers, second floor or the County Courthouse, 320 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca. The redistricting plan, recommended by the County's Independent Redistricting Commission after a year of careful study and deliberation, would reduce the number of County legislative districts from 15 to 14.

Legislator Chock stated firmly that she does not support going to hearing at this point and once again expressed serious concern about the 14-district configuration proposed, maintaining City of Ithaca residents are being asked to absorb all differences of reducing the size of the Legislature by one.

Legislator Mike Lane noted that a detailed debate on the issue occurred when the Legislature requested the Local Law to be drafted, and holding the public hearing amounts to the next step in the process. Legislator Dooley Kiefer said she will take opinions expressed at the public very seriously, and several Legislators expressed support of the independent process used to reach the redistricting recommendation contained in the proposed Local Law.

Contact: Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 257-7453.

Contracts Awarded for Airport Projects

The Legislature, by unanimous votes, awarded contracts for two construction projects at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. (Legislators Kathy Luz Herrera and Pam Mackesey were excused.) Bids were awarded for a \$1.6 million rehabilitation of the Terminal Apron, and associated runway and pavement work—DiFiore Construction Corporation of Rochester, General Contractor. The Federal Aviation Administration will support 90% of the basic project cost. Also included in the project is pavement overlay of one parking lot, which is not eligible for outside funding. Full local cost of the project is approximately \$130,000, supported through the Airport budget.

Legislators also awarded contracts for an operations addition to the Airport Crash Fire Rescue Building—LeChase Construction of Syracuse, General Contractor. The addition will allow operations technicians direct view of the runway, improving response time in bad weather conditions or in the event of an operational incident. Project cost of more than \$500,000 will be 90%-supported by the FAA, 5% by New York State, and the remaining 5% (over \$26,000) local share through airline charges.

Contact: Airport Manager Bob Nicholas, 257-0456; Carol Chock, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 273-9007.

Records Storage Agreement Approved

Legislators approved a ten-year lease agreement for underground records storage space at the Seneca Army Depot, at a cost of \$720 per month (\$8,640 per year). The vote was unanimous, with Legislators Kathy

Luz Herrera and Pam Mackesey excused. The sublease with Finger Lakes Technologies Real Estate Holdings, LLC takes effect as of October 1. The agreement, applying to storage of certain permanent original records the County must retain, stems from the need to relocate the Tompkins County Records Center to meet the Legislature's directive to vacate Old Library building in a timely manner. Nearly all County records have been digitally scanned, saving the County millions of dollars in anticipated cost that would have been needed to build a new records storage building.

The Legislature had been scheduled to vote on another measure that would have allowed the Old Library's other tenant, the Community Justice Center, to vacate; however, a proposal to enter into a multi-year lease agreement within Center Ithaca for space to house the Day Reporting Program and Drug Treatment, as recommended by the Capital Plan Review Committee, was withdrawn. County Administrator Joe Mareane told Legislators that the County learned last week that the space in question has been leased to another tenant and that the County is resuming the search for possible space. Both Capital Program Review Chair Mike Lane and Legislator Jim Dennis expressed serious disappointment about the decision and how it was communicated to the County. *Contact: Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 257-7453; Michael Lane, Chair, Capital Plan Review Committee, 844-8313 or 844-8440.*

Among other business, the Legislature

- Authorized the Sheriff's Office to accept a more than \$46,000 federal Homeland Security Grant on behalf of Cornell University to begin and maintain a regional K9 Explosive Detection Team, at no cost to the County. Under a mutual aid agreement, the team will be available to assist Tompkins and neighboring counties with incidents that require explosive detection. Legislator Dooley Kiefer voted no, saying she supports the matter in spirit but without a project budget can't support it.
- Authorized the transfer of more than \$47,000 in contingency funds to supplement budgeted funding to redesign the County website, redesign that will enhance the County's ability to connect with its citizens, make it easier for citizens to access County information and services, and improve the technical operation and functionality of the County website.
- Approved more than \$260,000 in certified "rollover" funding, unspent by six County departments in the 2011 budget, to support current-year spending.
- Scheduled a public hearing for August 21, 5:30 p.m., regarding a proposed addition to Agricultural District No. 2 on the west side of Cayuga Lake.
- Heard an update on Ithaca Commons development from City of Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick.

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