



Inclusion Through Diversity

Marcia E. Lynch, Public Information Officer  
607-274-5555, Office  
607-227-2152, Cell  
January 29, 2013  
TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **January 29, 2013** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislature Adopts Recommended Plan for TCAD Funding**

Adopting recommendations of a broad-based task force that studied how to best stabilize funding for Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD), the Legislature by unanimous vote supported a plan that the County enter into a multi-year funding agreement with Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD) to ensure a “sustained and balanced funding strategy” for the economic development agency. The plan had also been recommended without dissent by the Legislature’s planning and economic development committee.

Supporting a continued revenue structure with one-third shares coming from County funds, employer investors, and project fees, the plan calls for increased County support, beginning next year, coming, in part from county Room Occupancy Tax revenues. Based on advice from the County Attorney, the Task Force found that TCAD’s commitment to maintain and expand programs and activities that contribute to tourism and visitor activity justify such allocations within existing State and County law regarding the room tax.

The six-year funding agreement would begin this year, with a County contribution of \$177,750 (already included in the 2013 budget), then would phase in partial support through Room Tax, beginning with funding through available room tax reserves in 2014. Use of current-year Room Tax funds would begin in 2015, with the amount projected to increase each year through 2018. Significant County resources other than room tax would also be required to provide funding equivalent to one-third of the TCAD budget—total annual contribution including room tax and other county funds estimated at between \$200,000 and \$250,000 beginning in 2014. As projected, over the six-year period room tax revenues would represent 55% of the support to TCAD, with other county revenues contributing the remaining 45%. The agreement also would include the opportunity to reopen and adjust, should there be significant changes in financial circumstances.

Task force chair Art Pearce called the result of his group’s work “a genuine compromise” to provide TCAD with what it needs without placing an undue burden on other resources, noting that because of the phased-in approach and the anticipated growth in tourism revenue, it is anticipated that the portion of revenue diverted to TCAD will not have an appreciable impact on tourism support. Legislators thanked everyone involved in the task force for forging the compromise plan, which Legislator Jim Dennis predicted will benefit the county for the long term.

*Contact: Will Burbank, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee 272-7555; Martha Robertson, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 272-0584.*

#### **Human Rights Director Shawn Martel Moore to Leave County Post**

In what he termed “bittersweet” news, County Administrator Joe Mareane announced that Shawn Martel Moore, who has served as the County’s Director of Human Rights since 1999, and for four of those years also as a Deputy County Administrator, has accepted a major position with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York City and will leave her County position at the end of next month. Martel Moore will serve as the MTA’s Assistant Director, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Title VI Compliance.

Administrator Mareane recognized Martel Moore for serving the County with distinction, managing a complex department that worked hard to live up to both the letter and spirit of the laws, policies, and regulations central

to the values of this community. He also praised her community leadership, and for “serving as a great ambassador of our government and community, nationally and around the globe.” Many Legislators voiced sincere thanks for the Director’s many contributions, her leadership and guidance—as Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera put it, “exemplary professionalism tempered by compassion.”

*Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.*

### **Legislature Urges Preservation of Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund**

Objecting to the recent practice of by the State Division of Budget to take money from the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund to offset deficiencies in the State Budget and its closing of the grant application process for local governments, the Legislature, by unanimous vote, called upon Governor Cuomo and State legislators to direct the Division of Budget to immediately end that “sweeping” practice and to once again authorize local governments’ application for grants through the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. The fund, generated from monies collected by County Clerks on recording of land records and civil court filings, was created nearly 30 years ago to as a source of funding for local governments to support effective management of government records.

Legislator Frank Proto, who served for years as a commissioner for New York State Archives, called the program “one of the quietest programs of the State of New York,” which produces millions of dollars in benefit for municipalities across the state, called raiding the fund “absolutely ludicrous,” and said the effect of closing down the application process would be “devastating.”

*Contact: Aurora Valenti, Tompkins County Clerk, 274-5431; Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 257-7453; Legislator Frank Proto, 277-4875.*

### **Joel Twitchell Recognized as Distinguished Youth**

Groton Central School senior Joel Twitchell was recognized as the latest Tompkins County Distinguished Youth. Joel was nominated by Groton Mayor and Middle School principal Jeff Evener, who described him as “our man of all trades at the Groton Central School District.” Joel was honored for his many academic, church, and community achievements—activities such as president of the National Honor Society, member of Student Council and drama club, member of the varsity soccer, bowling, and track teams: church missionary challenge; and helping others in his neighborhood. Mr. Evener called Joel “an outstanding young man and...the epitome of what we want all of our students to become, with “an outstanding work ethic, a high level of organization, and a deep sense of caring for everyone he encounters.” 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.*

Among other actions, the Legislature

- Authorized a multi-year aquifer study agreement for the Enfield Creek Aquifer in the Town of Enfield in cooperation with the Town of Enfield and the United States Geological Service (USGS), as part of the County’s 20-year capital program. The study’s cost of \$257,844, spread over multiple years, will be \$257,844, shared by Tompkins County and the Town of Enfield (each 35%) and USGS (30%).
- Recommended Legislator Peter Stein to represent the County for a three-year term on the board for Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), succeeding Kathy Luz Herrera, who has served on the TCAT Board since 2000. Many legislators spoke of the strengths of both Legislator Stein and of Legislator Herrera, including her contributions during many years of service. Mr. Stein’s recommended appointment ultimately was approved by a 12-3 vote, Legislators Mike Lane, Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, and Herrera dissenting.
- Scheduled a public hearing for February 19, 5:30 p.m., at Legislative, concerning findings of a State fact finder related to provisions of the County’s collective bargaining agreement with its Deputy Sheriff’s Association not subject to interest arbitration and all matters pertaining to civilian employees.

**- END -**