



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **April 15, 2014** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Public Hearing Scheduled Regarding Proposed Assessment Relief Law

The Legislature voted to schedule a public hearing at its next meeting May 5 on a proposed Local Law that would enact provisions of a new State law included in the 2014 New York State Budget bill. The Mohawk Valley and Niagara County Assessment Relief Act gives a municipality, through Local Law, authority to adopt provisions of the act, which would allow the Department of Assessment to effectively “move” the taxable status date for an affected property owner to take into account any damage that occurred from the severe weather that occurred between June 20 and August 9 of last year. County Administrator Joe Mareane said local impact appears to be very minimal—perhaps only one property owner affected that might result in an adjustment of \$85 on the tax bill.

The vote to schedule the hearing was 10-3 (Legislators Peter Stein, Kathy Luz Herrera and Dooley Kiefer voted no; Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne was excused.) Legislator Martha Robertson said the hearing would represent a good faith effort to let the public know this provision exists and to get their opinions. Legislator Luz Herrera expressed concern that the matter was being considered at the last minute and that many had not seen the legislation. Legislator Kiefer said she could not support it at this time in view of the very limited benefit involved. The hearing will be held May 5, 5:30 p.m., at Legislature Chambers in the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca.

Contact: Nathan Shinagawa, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 280-7557

Maya Patt Recognized as Distinguished Youth

Maya Patt, of Danby, was recognized as Tompkins County Distinguished Youth for April. Nominated by Legislator Dan Klein, Maya is a 19-year-old Liberal Arts major at Tompkins Cortland Community College, where she is in the Honor Society and on the Dean’s List. Legislator Klein praised Maya’s service for the past year as a member of the Danby Community Council, believed to be the youngest-ever member of that organization. She has also worked as a counselor for the Danby Youth Program, as a volunteer mentor for the Earth Arts program, and has been involved in several local political campaigns. Mr. Klein said Maya was active in many extracurricular activities when she was a student at Ithaca High School, including serving as vice president of the Model United Nations Club, Photo Editor for the school newspaper, and as a member of the garden club and Asian American Club.

Ms. Patt told Legislators this area is “the best place anybody could grow up in” and that she hopes to someday serve this community on the same level that Legislators do.

The Tompkins County Distinguished Youth Award is cosponsored by Specialty Trophies & Awards, Bangs Ambulance Service, Purity Ice Cream, and Cayuga Radio Group.

Contact: Legislature Office, 274-5434; Legislator Dan Klein, 272-7582.

Tourism Grants Awarded

The Legislature approved the Spring 2014 round of County Tourism Grants, funded through County Room Occupancy Tax revenue. Awarded were \$38,800 in New Tourism Initiative grants, \$78,300 in Tourism Project

grants, \$29,009 in Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants; nearly \$24,000 in Community Celebration Grants, and \$188,000 in grants for Arts and Culture Organizational Development.

Contact: Will Burbank, Chair, Economic Development Committee, 272-7555; Senior Planner Thomas Knipe, County Tourism Coordinator, 274-5560.

Legislature Authorizes Family Treatment Court Grant

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne was excused) authorized the Department of Social Services to accept a two-year, \$225,000 competitive grant from the California-based non-profit *Children and Family Futures* to support an two-year initiative at the Family Treatment Court to provide more comprehensive family-centered care to children, parents, and families affected by substance use disorders and child abuse and neglect

Contact: Patricia Carey, Commissioner of Social Services, 274-5251. Peter Stein, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 266-7579.

Among other actions:

County Finance Director Rick Snyder reported that the latest monthly report of Sales Tax distribution shows that county sales tax receipts for February were down by more than 7% from a year ago, the second month of decline, but that the first-quarter reconciled report from the State, expected later this month, will be a firmer indication of where things stand. County Administrator Joe Mareane said that results communicated in the quarterly report will indicate whether any remedial action for the 2014 budget would be advised, as well as how the 2015 budget might be affected.

Administrator Mareane reminded Legislators that by June 15 of next year counties, as part of the Governor's property tax freeze plan contained in the new State budget, will be required to submit a report to the State regarding the shared services and consolidations that can be implemented to save 1% of the aggregate tax levy for all county municipalities in each of the next three years. He cautioned that will be a major undertaking, and at the next meeting of the Tompkins County Council of Governments, Legislature Chair Mike Lane, as a first step, will ask all municipalities to prepare an inventory of shared services already in place.

Former member of the County Board of Representatives Don Lifton addressed the Legislature urging that the Legislature seek a position on the search committee for a new Cornell president. Mr. Lifton, who is also a past member of the University Board of Trustees, said this would be a critical step in protecting the community's stake in this important decision.

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