



Inclusion Through Diversity

Marcia E. Lynch, Public Information Officer
607-274-5555, Office
607-227-2152, Cell
July 1, 2014
TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **July 1, 2014** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Michael Hall Appointed Interim Airport Manager

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, confirmed County Administrator Joe Mareane's appointment of Michael Hall as Interim Manager of Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. (Legislators Mike Sigler and Nathan Shinagawa were excused.) Mr. Hall will serve as Interim Airport Manager following the retirement of Airport Manager Bob Nicholas July 31, after 25 years of distinguished service.

Mr. Hall, an Ithaca native and longstanding member of the Tompkins County Air Service Board, will serve in the interim position until a permanent Manager is appointed. A nationwide search for a permanent Airport Manager concluded without a consensus and the County has decided to undertake a new search.

A Cornell grad and former fighter pilot who rose to Air Force General, Mr. Hall's responsibilities, during a 27-year military career, included command of the 174th fighter wing in Syracuse and management of Hancock Air base, the military version of an airport. He also served as Commissioner of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, the agency tasked with the administration of the Army and Air National Guard, and as the Chair of the NYS Disaster Preparedness Commission. More recently Hall has played a key role in transforming the National Warplane Museum in Elmira into the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, a regional science academy for youth.

"Mike Hall is quite familiar with airport operations, the FAA, safety regulations governing airports, and how to lead and manage staff," Administrator Mareane observed. "At this important time in the life of our airport, he is someone who will serve not as a caretaker of the airport, but as one who will bring insights, energy, organizational skills, and leadership to the job as we work to optimize the efficiency and performance of the airport, and undertake a search for a new Manager." Compensation for the interim position will be at a comparable level to the current Airport Manager salary, but without the fringe benefit expense.

Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.

Legislature Approves TC3 Budget

By unanimous vote, the Legislature adopted the 2014-2015 operating budget for Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). (Legislators Mike Sigler and Nathan Shinagawa were excused.) The \$39.1 million budget includes a total sponsoring community contribution of about \$4.5 million (split between Tompkins and Cortland Counties), a 3% increase in sponsor contribution over the current year's budget. Tompkins' share of the sponsor contribution is just under \$2.9 million (63%), based on a funding formula related to the proportion of students enrolled from each county. Tompkins' contribution is about \$83,000 more than that for the current year. The Cortland County Legislature has already approved the budget.

The budget reflects a \$75 increase in state aid per full-time equivalent student, which is still \$178 less than five years ago, and a \$200 increase in full-time student tuition, a little more than 1% increase in personnel wage expense and about 5.5% increase in benefit expense, with ten fewer positions filled.

College president Dr. Carl Haynes thanked the Legislature for its continued support, and Budget Committee Chair Jim Dennis thanked President Haynes for his ongoing excellent work, along with College staff, in developing the budget and informing Legislators about the College and the budget.

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

Legislature Mourns the Death of Former Chair Stuart Stein

The Legislature observed a moment of silence in honor of long-time Legislator and past Chair Stuart Stein, who passed away June 26 at the age of 84. Mr. Stein represented District 3 on the Board of Representatives (now Legislature) from 1982-2001, and served three years as Chair, from 1994 to 1996. Before joining county government, Mr. Stein served on City of Ithaca Common Council during the formative years of downtown development in the 1970s.

Legislator Jim Dennis, who in 1974 succeeded Mr. Stein years ago on Common Council, praised his many contributions, his intelligence and common sense devoted to benefiting the community. “The community is blessed to have had him for all the time we had him,” Dennis said. “He was huge in my life as a local elected official and huge to the whole community.” Legislator Carol Chock said, “Until the week that he died, Stu continued to be a teacher and a mentor to many of us” and also fostered town-gown cooperation.” County Attorney Jonathan Wood, who in part worked with Mr. Stein when he led the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA) after retirement from the Legislature, noted that the organization that began as a partnership between Tompkins and Tioga Counties, now has close to 300 municipal and school district members. Mr. Wood called Stein “a true mentor, who would set out to do things and would always seem to accomplish them” and that he will be missed.

Legislature Chair Mike Lane, who served on the legislature with Mr. Stein for many years, joined in calling him “a great leader and a great mentor to many of us.”

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434, 844-8313, or 844-8440.

Public Hearing Scheduled Regarding Solar, Alternative Energy Exemption

The Legislature, without dissent, scheduled a public hearing before the Legislature on July 15 at 5:30 p.m., on proposed repeal of a Local Law passed in 2012 that opts out of a section of State Real Property Tax Law providing exemptions related to construction of solar, wind or farm waste energy systems. (Legislators Mike Sigler and Nathan Shinagawa were excused.) While Assessment Director Jay Franklin has advised that construction of residential solar systems have not affected property assessments, officials of the Solar Tompkins program have indicated that concern about the solar exemption has been voiced again and again by those considering participation in the program, and several people addressed the Legislature in support of scheduling the hearing.

Contact: Carol Chock, Chair, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 273-9007

Legislature Authorizes Support of Conservation Easement Proposals for Two Local Farms

The Legislature authorized the County Planning Department to assist Mazourek Farms in Newfield and Glenwood Farms in Ulysses in seeking State grant funds to develop farmland protection conservation easements—actions approved without dissent by the Legislature. (Legislators Nathan Shinagawa and Mike Sigler were excused.) The State Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) funding once granted, support permanent protection of high quality farmland.

Contact: Senior Planner Scott Doyle, 274-5560; Carol Chock, Chair, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 273-9007.

- END -