



Inclusion Through Diversity

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November 6, 2014
TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **November 6, 2014** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislator Brian Robison Announces Resignation

Legislator Brian Robison today announced that he will resign from the Tompkins County Legislature as of November 30, to become Tompkins County Undersheriff. Tompkins County Sheriff Ken Lansing today announced Mr. Robison's appointment, as part of a Sheriff's Office reorganization for the Sheriff's second term.

Mr. Robison, a retired police investigator, with 21 years of service with the Ithaca Police Department, has served on the County Legislature since 2010, representing District 9 (Town of Groton and portions of the Towns of Dryden and Lansing.) He has chaired the Legislature's Public Safety Committee since 2013 and has served on the budget committee during his entire time on the Legislature.

Legislator Robison said he has found service on the Legislature a very meaningful experience, and that he cares about the issues, and his fellow legislators. "For the most part, we deal with things on a non-partisan basis," he said, "We act how we feel is to the benefit of our residents." He said he was honored to be asked to serve as Undersheriff, and looks forward to working with a very professional, very dedicated staff."

Many legislators praised Robison—Chair Mike Lane noted that he's taken on some "tough issues" during his service; Legislator Mike Sigler said his will be "a missed voice on the Legislature;" Legislator Nate Shinagawa noted that, "With Brian, issues have never been partisan—whatever is good for the common good is what drives his decision-making" and has made him a fair and effective legislator." Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne said his skills "will be extremely beneficial to our sheriff's department."

Under County law, a special election to fill the District 9 seat on the Legislature must be held within 75 days of when the position becomes vacant. Chair Lane asked Government Operations Chair Nate Shinagawa, County Attorney Jonathan Wood, and County Administrator Joe Mareane to work to bring forward a resolution regarding scheduling of the special election, that the Legislature can act on at its first meeting in December.

More on Sheriff Lansing's announcement of the Office reorganization may be found at the County website at www.tompkinscountyny.gov/news/sheriff-lansing-announces-office-reorganization-second-term .

Contact: Legislator Brian Robison, 351-3601; Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434, 844-8313, or 844-8440.

Bonding Authorized for William George Agency, Kendal at Ithaca

The Legislature approved issuance by the Tompkins County Development Corporation of tax-exempt revenue bonds—bonding of up to \$2 million for the William George Agency for Children's Services, and of up to \$60 million in bonds for Kendal at Ithaca.

Bonding for the William George Agency was approved by a 10-1 vote (Legislator Carol Chock voting no; with Legislators Mike Sigler, Martha Robertson, and Kathy Luz-Herrera excused), will support a dining hall renovation and equipment at its Freeville campus, as well as other improvements.

For Kendal, the bonding (approved without dissent) will underwrite an 84,000 square foot addition to the facility (to accommodate an independent living apartment building and a skilled nursing facility), and other renovations and equipment; the bonds will also refinance earlier bond debt. (Legislator Carol Chock noted that Kendal should be lauded by proactively addressing energy issues as part of the project.) The tax-exempt bonds, which must be approved by the Legislature under State law, carry no indebtedness to the County and give the non-profit organizations access to tax-free financing under the federal Internal Revenue Code.

Contact: Will Burbank, Chair, Economic Development Committee, 272-7555

Funds Allocated to Install AEDs in County Facilities

The Legislature, without dissent, appropriated \$65,000 in contingency funding to support the cost of acquiring and installing automated external defibrillator (AED) devices in County facilities and vehicles, and to provide training in the use of those devices. The measure notes that communities with comprehensive AED programs have achieved survival rates of nearly 40% for cardiac arrest victims, and that it is the desire of the Legislature to provide the AEDs in all of its facilities and at its job sites in order to respond quickly and effectively to life-threatening cardiac events that may occur at those sites.

Contact: David McKenna, Vice Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243

Legislature Sets 2015 Solid Waste Annual Fee

The Legislature approved the unit charge for the Tompkins County solid waste annual fee for 2015. The charge, as also recommended as part of the 2015 Tentative County Budget, is \$52 per unit (household or church)—a \$4.00 decrease, with different unit charges other classes of property according to an established rate schedule. The vote was 11-1, with Legislator Carol Chock dissenting, and Mike Sigler and Kathy Luz-Herrera excused.

Contact: Solid Waste Manager Barbara Eckstrom, 273-6632; David McKenna, Vice Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243

Legislature Supports Statewide Campaign on Textile Recycling

The Legislature went on record demonstrating its strong support of a statewide campaign to recover more textiles from the waste stream. The vote was unanimous, with Legislators Kathy Luz Herrera and Mike Sigler excused. The measure notes that the United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 85% of textiles are trashed, instead of being donated for reuse or recycling, and that in New York State alone, 1.4 billion pounds of textiles, with a market value of \$200 million, trashed each year. The action applauds the first-of-its-kind textile recovery campaign coordinated by several trade organizations and notes that Tompkins County, with its goal of 75% waste diversion from the landfill by 2015, seeks to take a continued leadership role in recycling efforts by promoting textile recovery efforts.

Contact: Solid Waste Manager Barbara Eckstrom, 273-6632; David McKenna, Vice Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243

Among other business:

No one commented at a public hearing held on proposed repeal of the Local Law approved by the Legislature earlier this year to override the State tax cap in the 2015 County budget. Repeal of the law would be required under the State's new property tax freeze law for homeowners to qualify for the amount of increase, and is proposed since the County does not anticipate adopting a budget that would exceed the cap. Consideration of repeal is scheduled for November 18, prior to that night's budget adoption vote.

More than a dozen people addressed the Legislature, expressing serious concern about the NYSEG proposal for a seven-mile, 10-inch gas distribution line along West Dryden Road in Freeville, several of them West Dryden Road residents, who criticized the easement proposals presented by the utility. Speakers maintained the initiative runs contrary to the County's long-standing concern about energy policy.

Legislature Chair Mike Lane and several of her legislative colleagues congratulated Legislator Martha Robertson on her campaign to represent New York's 23rd District in Congress. Chair Lane said, "The fact she did this work was commendable." Legislator Mike Sigler called her run an amazing feat, especially considering the vast size of the district.

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