



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **July 7, 2015** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Approves TC3 Budget

The Tompkins County Legislature, by unanimous vote, adopted the 2015-2016 operating budget for Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3). (Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera was excused.)

The \$39.36 million budget includes a total sponsoring community contribution of about \$4.65 million (split between Tompkins and Cortland Counties), a 2% increase in sponsor contribution over the current year's budget. Tompkins' share of the sponsor contribution is just over \$2.9 million (63%), based on a funding formula related to the proportion of students enrolled from each county—Tompkins' contribution \$57,445 more than for the current year. The Cortland County Legislature will act on the budget later this week.

Total spending is 0.5% greater than the current budget. It reflects a \$100 (4%) increase in state aid per full-time equivalent student, which College president Dr. Carl Haynes noted is \$150 less than what had been proposed and \$68 less than the level of support five years ago. The budget includes a \$150 increase in full-time student tuition and a \$7.00 (4.4%) per credit hour increase for part-time students. Enrollment is expected to be just over 3,600 FTEs, down 164 from the current year's budget. As part of the budget, the College has also sought sponsor approval to appropriate \$91,183 of the College's \$1.4 million fund balance, equivalent to an additional 2% sponsor contribution, to support operations.

President Haynes characterized it as a "responsible budget", which continues the support the College provides to its communities and its students. Budget chair Jim Dennis thanked Dr. Haynes, as well as his colleagues for supporting TC3.

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

Tax Cap Override Law Approved

The Legislature approved a Local Law that permits the Legislature to override the 2016 tax levy limit, if it opts to do so as a result of the 2016 budget process. Passage of such a law, which has been done every year since the Property Tax Cap went into effect, would not mean that the Legislature intends to exceed the cap, but would provide the flexibility to exceed the cap if deemed necessary, and would protect the County if it meets the cap, as calculated, but inadvertently exceeds it due to clerical or technical errors. Budget chair Jim Dennis called the action a "safeguard" related to the budget process.

The Local Law was approved by a vote of 10-3, with Legislators Peter Stein, Mike Sigler, and Glenn Morey voting no (Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera was excused.) As he has in past years, Legislator Stein said he thinks the action sends the wrong message to constituents, that the Legislature is too enthusiastic about overriding the tax cap.

Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 387-4058.

More Comment on Old Library Project; Robertson Recuses Herself on Issue

The Legislature heard more public comment on the Old Library project, which returns to the Old Library Committee for review July 10, after neither proposal drew the necessary eight votes at the Legislature's June 16

meeting. Sixteen people addressed legislators, including a number who repeated their support for the Franklin Properties project and principals of Travis-Hyde who provided clarification and information. Many speakers voiced strong support for Lifelong and said the organization should be supported no matter what the decision on development of the Old Library site.

Legislator Martha Robertson also announced that she will recuse herself from any discussion or decision-making on the matter of selecting a preferred developer for the Old Library site. Noting her long-time core beliefs in providing needed affordable housing in this community and in environmental concerns, Robertson said she received contributions to her 2013 campaign for Congress from one of the proposers and unknowingly violated revised provisions of the County Code of Ethics, which looks back 24 months to define potential conflicts of interest. Robertson noted she had recused herself in 2014 from the Old Library Committee, but hadn't realized that any longer any conflict of interest still existed.

The Old Library Committee will meet July 10 at 9 a.m. in Legislature Chambers, second floor of the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca.

Contact: Legislature Chair Mike Lane, Chair of the Old Library Committee, 274-5434, 844-8313, or 844-8440; Legislator Martha Robertson, 272-0584.

Sale of Freeville Property Authorized to Provide Affordable Housing

The Legislature authorized an agreement with Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services for sale of a property located on Cook Street in the Village of Freeville, adjacent to the Lehigh Crossing senior housing apartment development, which was withheld from the 2014 foreclosure auction. The action authorizes sale to INHS for \$7,320 (based on the amount of past taxes due plus maintenance costs) for the public purpose of development of the property for provision of affordable housing, in line with principles of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan. The vote was unanimous, with Legislator Carol Chock abstaining and Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera excuse. Legislator Chock recused herself because of her family connection with INHS.

Contact: Dan Klein, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 272-7582.

Among other business:

The Legislature awarded the contract for replacement of the Groton City Road Bridge to Silverline Construction, Inc., of Burdett, NY, in the amount of \$321,892. The vote was 11-2, with Legislators Dooley Keifer and Carol Chock voting no and Legislator Kathy Luz Herrera excused. Legislator Kiefer said she believes the \$1.1 million project budget excessive for something she believes is not needed. Legislator Chock questioned the current temporary "Bailey" bridge currently at the site and whether it was intended to remain there long-term.

The Legislature authorized a 2015 Capital Grant application for Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) and Tompkins County, awarded by the New York State Department of Transportation under the FTA Section 5307 Urban Transit Program (over \$2.1 million federal allocation). Funded projects will include purchase of five replacement 40-foot buses and facility renovation and construction for TCAT and mobility management program support.

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