



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **January 5, 2016** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Lane Elected to Third Year as Legislature Chair

At its 2016 organizational meeting, the Tompkins County Legislature reelected Legislator Michael Lane (D) to a third year as Chair of the Legislature. Legislator Daniel Klein (D) was elected Vice Chair. The positions of Chair and Vice Chair are filled each year by majority vote of members of the Legislature. Both Chair Lane and Vice Chair Klein were the only nominations advanced, and were each elected by unanimous votes. (Legislator Martha Robertson was excused.

Mr. Lane, first elected to the Legislature in 1993, is serving his fifth term on the Legislature, representing District 14 (Eastern part of the Town of Dryden, including the Villages of Dryden and Freeville). He served three consecutive terms, then after a one-term hiatus, was returned to the Legislature for two more.

Mr. Klein, who represents District 7 (Towns of Caroline and Danby, and a portion of the Town of Ithaca), has served on the Legislature since 2014, elected to his first term after serving on the Danby Town Board from 2007 to 2013. Vice Chair Klein chaired the Legislature's Government Operations Committee during 2015 and is one of the County's representatives to the board for Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT).

Nominating Mr. Lane for Chair, Legislator Jim Dennis said that as Chair, Mike Lane has consistently demonstrated the attributes of a great leader—including competence, honesty, and commitment, what Mr. Dennis termed an “extreme commitment to Tompkins County.”

Nominating Mr. Klein, Legislator Will Burbank said he has been “amazed” at all that Dan Klein has accomplished in two years on the Legislature, and noted that his experience in government goes much deeper, with his service on the Danby Town Board, including service as Deputy Supervisor. He said Dan “is not one of the big talkers on this body....but when he talks, people listen.”

Mr. Lane thanked the people of his district and his colleagues on the Legislature for their vote of confidence. He also paid tribute to and thanked outgoing Vice Chair Jim Dennis, who chose not to put forth his name as a candidate for Vice Chair.

Mr. Klein said he just wants to do a good job for the residents of Tompkins County and of his district, and for all the employees of Tompkins County and his colleagues on the Legislature. He said he has some standards in his mind, and hopes to live up to those standards, and those of the Legislature.

Chair Lane will deliver his annual Chair's message and announce the 2016 committee structure and appointments at the Legislature's next meeting January 19.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434, 844-8440, or 844-8313; Daniel Klein, Vice Chair, 272-7582.

Lance Salisbury Appointed Assigned Counsel Program Supervising Attorney

The Legislature, without dissent, confirmed County Administrator Joe Mareane's appointment of Lance Salibury as Supervising Attorney of the County's Assigned Counsel Office. (Legislator Martha Robertson was

excused.) As is required, Mr. Salisbury's appointment has also been recommended and confirmed by the County Advisory Board on Indigent Representation. As Supervising Attorney, he succeeds the Wes McDermott, who passed away last September.

Mr. Salisbury holds two Master's Degrees, in Regional Planning from Cornell University and in Geography from the University of Iowa, as well as a J.D. from Cornell Law. Administrator Mareane called his experience remarkable—including relief work and efforts to restore and reconstruct civil society in places such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Liberia, and Somalia, including managing a ten-office legal aid program in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He operates a law office in Tompkins County and has served on the County's assigned counsel panel, and serves as an adjunct professor of law at Cornell, where he designed and teaches the criminal defense clinic class.

"I'm very pleased to recommend Mr. Salisbury for your confirmation to the position of Supervising Attorney," Administrator Mareane told the Legislature. "I believe all involved feel he will sustain the program's reputation as among the best indigent defense offices in the State, and will lead us into a new era of engagement with at least one other county."

Thanking the Legislature, Mr. Salisbury said, "Wes left enormous shoes to fill...Tompkins County's Assigned Counsel Program has always had an excellent reputation. I see this as an opportunity to continue that, to build rather than to stand still. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me."

Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.

Funding Approved for Sheriff's Office Body Cameras

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislator Martha Robertson was excused), approved the appropriation of \$46,500 from the Contingent Fund to purchase officer body cameras and related services by the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office. Funds will support program hardware and software costs, and related professional services, under contract with Taser Corporation. The action also increases the Sheriff's Office target budget by \$23,000 to reflect the ongoing future annual cost to support the body camera system and support the cost of related service.

Saying that she supports purchase of the cameras, Legislator Carol Chock added that it's important to recognize that body cameras are only a tool, and will only be as productive as the way they are used. In response to concern expressed by Legislator Dooley Kiefer concerning adaptation to potential future technology change, Acting Public Safety Chair Jim Dennis said that information collected and stored now will be available to any future company, should the County opt to change contractors in the future.

Contact: James Dennis, Acting Chair, Public Safety Committee, 592-3206

Capital Program Amended to Add Library Renovation Project

The Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Martha Robertson was excused), approved amendment of the County's five-year Capital Program to add a renovation project for the Tompkins County Public Library building, at an estimated total cost of \$1.4 million. The project will consist of an estimated \$1.1 million renovation to support Library reuse of space vacated by the Finger Lakes Library System for Library purposes, including a new teen center and 21st Century lab—that cost to be fully supported by funds raised by the Tompkins County Public Library Foundation as part of its 21st Century Library Campaign. Also included will be investment of \$300,000 of County funds to replace the 15-year-old carpet throughout the library—that cost to be borne by the County. Amendment of the Capital Program is the first step toward designing and construction of the improvements.

Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243; County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5555.

Legislature Authorizes Increased Housing Fund Award for 210 Hancock Street Project, Grants Two Other Approvals

The Legislature took three actions related to Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, all related to support of affordable housing. All were approved by unanimous votes, with Legislator Martha Robertson excused and Legislator Carol Chock abstaining, recusing herself because of her family connection with INHS.

As recommended by the Housing Fund Program Oversight Committee, the Legislature authorized a \$100,000 increase in the Housing Fund appropriation for the 210 Hancock Street project. Late last year, the Legislature authorized expenditure of \$100,000 in County housing funds, and acceptance of \$100,000 from the City for 210 Hancock. Subsequently, another \$100,000 became available, due to the recent cancellation of the Greenways affordable housing project. The Housing Fund assists with predevelopment costs associated with residential and mixed-use real estate development projects that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income individuals. The County's share of Housing Fund awards come from Community Development Block Grant program income funds.

The Legislature also accepted award of \$691,500 in New York State Community Development Block Grant funds under the 2015 CDBG Competitive Housing Round to continue the Tompkins County Homeownership Program for first-time homebuyers. And it authorized the granting of \$200,000 in federal Small Cities and State CDBG program income funds to INHS to continue the Homeownership Program during any gap in the availability of CDBG funds for the program.

Speaking to the Legislature prior to the votes, INHS Director Paul Mazarella thanked the County Legislature, as well as the City of Ithaca, for their ongoing support of affordable housing, and their foresight in creating and recently extending the Housing Fund, saying such local support has been critical in securing State funding support for such projects as 210 Hancock.

Contact: Dooley Kiefer, Chair, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 257-7453; Senior Planner Megan McDonald, Tompkins County Planning, 274-5560.

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