



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Legislature Supports “Banning the Box” for County Employment Applications

Following a year of study on the issue, the Legislature, without dissent, passed a resolution of support for the Commissioner of Personnel to implement procedures to eliminate the criminal conviction disclosure from the Tompkins County employment application (“banning the box”), except in cases where certain convictions preclude employment in specified job titles. (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused.) For most positions, criminal conviction disclosures and subsequent inquiries now will be delayed until later in the application process. The practice applies for all public entities under Tompkins County’s Civil Service authority that use the Tompkins County employment application.

While an affirmative response to the criminal conviction disclosure has never been an automatic bar from consideration for employment, the concern is that asking the question at the beginning of the process could deter an individual from applying for jobs for which he or she might be eligible and qualified. Procedures have been developed to ensure that, for most job titles, the Personnel Department receives attestations from applicants at the end of the hiring process and will then establish whether any such past convictions have relevance to the position in question.

Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee Chair Jim Dennis, and several other legislators, referenced former local journalist and criminal justice advocate Keri Blakinger, who brought the “ban the box” issue to the attention of the Legislature in a presentation early last year. Since then, Dennis said, the County has done due diligence in checking with all our customers...school districts, towns, and villages...and in the most part they are in agreement with what we are wanting to do. Legislators thanked Mr. Dennis for convening the study committee, and Personnel staff for their research and hard work to make it happen. Dennis also thanked the County’s Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee for its role in raising the issue. Personnel Commissioner Amy Guererri estimates the process will be implemented within the next one to two months. The Legislature will ask Personnel to report back in a year on results from the change.

Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 592-3206; Amy Guererri, Commissioner of Personnel, 274-5526.

Draft Proposal Document for Police Consolidation Study Presented

Following up on an initial report at the Legislature’s last meeting, County Administrator Joe Mareane presented the Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services to conduct a feasibility study regarding potential restructuring and shared services involving county law enforcement agencies, including the County and the City of Ithaca, as well as the villages of Cayuga Heights, Groton, and Dryden, through the Tompkins County Law Enforcement Shared Services Initiative. A \$50,000 New York State shared services grant has been awarded to support the study, under Governor Cuomo’s Municipal Restructuring Fund Program.

Administrator Mareane said this is not a new conversation, but is now receiving a serious focus, and noted that the study was referenced in the County’s Government Efficiency Plan submitted to New York State. The consultant study, he said, is only a first step, using a relatively clinical approach, to look at the benefits and costs, the pros and cons, of a few potential common sense options—such as consolidation of some agency functions; full consolidation that would occur over a number of years by managing natural attrition; and a full

consolidation that would occur more quickly, by the dissolution of municipal departments and expansion of the County's police force. The study will not recommend action, but will look at the relative pros and cons. The administrator stressed that any later stages of the process—such as deciding what, if any, option to pursue; authorizing development of an implementation plan; and acting on any potential implementation plan—would involve “tremendous opportunities for public comment”, and that such public input would be critical to the decision-making process.

Speaking for the need for public engagement, Legislator Carol Chock said she thinks it important to mention something about “public trust in equitable law enforcement” in the RFP document, that public perceptions and concerns about current law enforcement structure should also be examined as part of the initial stage. Both Public Safety Chair Peter Stein and Legislator Martha Robertson said the focus at this early stage should be primarily on the data needed, and after that determining how to proceed.

The draft RFP document is posted for review at the County Administration page of the County website at http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/ctyadmin/Draft_RFP_TC_LawEnfSharedServicesInitiative.pdf.

The Legislature's Public Safety Committee will be asked to approve a final version of the RFP document at its meeting of July 21, 3:30 p.m., held at Legislature Chambers. Comments on the document may be submitted to County Administrator Mareane in advance of that meeting. (Submission of public comments suggested via e-mail at pubinfo@tompkins-co.org.)

Contact: County Administrator Joe Mareane, 274-5551.

Funding Agreement Approved for Coddington Road Highway Safety Improvements

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused) authorized a funding agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation for Coddington Road highway safety improvements at the intersections with Burns Road and East King Road in the Town of Ithaca. The action authorizes the County to pay up-front total federal and non-federal costs of right-of-way incidentals work on the project, and makes available \$16,400 from the Coddington Road Capital Project account, with the agreement providing for reimbursement for up to that amount from State and Federal sources. Local cost is expected to be about \$410.

Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243; Highway Director Jeff Smith, 274-0300.

County Bond Sale Results

Finance Director Rick Snyder reported on the County's recent sales of Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) and New Money Bonds to support County projects. On June 23, nearly \$5.3 million in one-year notes were sold at a net interest rate of 0.9580% to Raymond James & Associates, Inc., to continue financing of Pine Tree Road Reconstruction, and provide temporary financing for several other projects including County road and bridge projects, Library improvements, and Ellis Hollow Road, Phase 3. The County, with its reaffirmed and positive Moody's bond rating of Aa1 (stable), sold \$2.56 million in 11-year Public Improvement (Serial) Bonds, also to Raymond James & Associates, at a net interest rate of 1.449%, an offering that Mr. Snyder noted is the best achieved in the past five years. The bonds fund 2016 road and bridge improvements, the jail access control system/security cameras, and the facilities capital maintenance program.

Contact: Finance Director Rick Snyder, 274-5544.

Among other business,

The Legislature accepted a \$149,025 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to support streambank stabilization in Ludlowville, a follow-up element of the Ludlowville Stormwater Control Project, completed in 2015, to reduce flood damage to Ludlowville residences. This further flood mitigation work will stabilize a stream in Ludlowville to further retain water while also reducing erosion. A 25% local match (maximum of \$49,675) will be required.

The Legislature accepted a New York State Homeland Security Grant award of \$86,250 to the Department of Emergency Response to acquire and install additional mobile-data terminals in fire and emergency medical

services apparatus, to further enhance coordination and information sharing activities among the public safety community through the County's computer-aided dispatch and mobile-data system. The action also amends the capital budget to reflect the grant funding.

A five-year contract was awarded to the 2nd *Landing Café* for operating the terminal café at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, succeeding a six-month contract that expires at the end of August, 2016.

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