



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Highlights of the **November 21, 2017** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislators Voice Special Thanks to Recognize Departing Administrator Joe Mareane**

With what they termed as “an abundance of gratitude,” members of the Tompkins County Legislature joined in proclamation “to recognize and thank Joe Mareane for his years of dedicated and tireless service to the residents and employees of Tompkins County, upon his retirement from a 37-year career in local government. Mr. Mareane, who has served as Tompkins County Administrator for the past nine years, commenced a medical leave as of November 13, and will retire as of November 30.

Legislators, Department Heads, and staff joined in paying tribute, many wearing orange to symbolize the Administrator’s Syracuse connection—from graduating from Syracuse University’s Maxwell School in 1979, through his many years in Syracuse and Onondaga County government, where he last served for 12 years as Chief Fiscal Officer before joining Tompkins County in 2008. The wide-ranging, two-page proclamation described his extensive career in public service and thanked him for the many, many ways of how he has contributed to Tompkins County through his executive leadership.

“Joe became Tompkins County Administrator in October 2008, just as the Great Recession was beginning,” the proclamation states, “clearly an excellent moment to assume fiscal responsibility for a county of 110,000 souls, a \$165 million budget, and a 750-person workforce engaged in programs that range from aging services to youth programs, and literally everything in between...[S]teering Tompkins County through the fiscal crisis of the Great Recession was Joe’s overriding project for the following years, a project he performed with consummate wisdom, empathy, skill, and humor, so that we were able to maintain critical county services for our residents and shield our workforce from the layoffs that many local governments endured.”

The document continues with more than a page of examples of Mr. Mareane’s accomplishments, where his leadership has made a difference.

Several department heads and many Legislators reflected on their experiences in working with Joe Mareane—his dedication, his expertise, his support and guidance. Among them, Legislator Anna Kelles called him “one of the most amazing mentors that I have ever had. He is a true leader, and one I think we should all try to emulate a little bit.” Legislature Chair Mike Lane said, “Joe gave everybody his time and his friendship. He tried so hard to deal with our employees and make them successful. He has the patience of a saint and he gave us good advice,” and that he will be sorely missed.

“We, the members of the Tompkins County Legislature, on behalf of the residents of Tompkins County and the employees of the Tompkins County government, do hereby extend our deepest appreciation to Joe Mareane for his unparalleled and unstinting public service throughout his career, and send him our very warmest wishes for a healthy and happy retirement,” the proclamation concludes.

Read the Legislature’s full proclamation at  
<http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files2/legislature/Joe%20Mareane.pdf> .  
Contact: Michael Lane, Chair of the Legislature, 274-5434 or 844-8440.

### **Reserve Funds Appropriated for Two Preservation Initiatives**

The Legislature, in two separate unanimous votes, appropriated funds from the Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection, for two local projects—the West Hill Wildway – Babcock Acquisition near Coy Glen in the Town of Ithaca and the Black Diamond Trail Buffer-Reynolds Buffer Protection Project in the Town of Ulysses. (Legislators Dave McKenna, Shawna Black, and Will Burbank were excused.) For the Black Diamond Trail Buffer, \$15,000 in capital reserve funds were allocated to assist the Finger Lakes Land Trust in purchasing 12 acres of land in Ulysses to ensure long-term protection of woodlands bordering the Black Diamond Trail and the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway. For the West Hill Wildway, \$5,000 was allocated to assist the Land Trust with project costs associated with acquiring 70 acres of property off Culver Road in the Town of Ithaca—to buffer Coy Glen and connect Cornell University’s Coy Glen holdings with Town of Ithaca conservation lands located on Culver Road.

*Contact: Associate Planner Scott Doyle, 274-5560; Martha Robertson, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 592-3119.*

### **PSC Approval of West Dryden Road Pipeline Alternative**

The Legislature learned that the State Public Service Commission has unanimously approved NYSEG’s compressor proposal to address energy and economic development needs as an alternative to the proposed West Dryden Road natural gas pipeline. At tonight’s meeting, Caroline Town Councilmember Irene Weiser reported on the PSC decision, which came in response to local initiative out of the County’s Energy and Economic Development Task Force. NYSEG’S compressor solution will place four pressure boosters at strategic locations along the existing gas distribution system to ensure operating pressure in the Lansing service area stays at safe operating levels during very cold, high-heating-demand days, expected to be installed in time for the 2018-19 heating season. The Legislature had voted unanimously to support NYSEG’s compressor proposal, and Tompkins County Area Development had also supported the plan.

*Contact: Martha Robertson, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 592-3119*

### **Legislature Opposes Elimination of the Federal Income Tax Deduction for State and Local Taxes**

The Legislature, without dissent, formally expressed its strong opposition to any tax reform proposal that would eliminate the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction and urged Congressman Reed and Senators Gillibrand and Schumer to join publicly in opposing any such proposal. With Congress giving serious consideration to eliminating such deductions, the Legislature’s resolution notes, in part, that the deduction is heavily utilized by residents of our community and State, that without it residents would be faced with double taxation, and that this federal cost shift onto local governments would place extreme pressure on municipal budgets, including diminished revenue for essential local government investments, including public safety and public infrastructure.

*Contact: James Dennis, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 592-3206*

Among other business,

The Legislature approved a number of standard year-end resolutions, including implementing fees, memberships, and position changes that are part of the approved 2018 County Budget, and formally creating a Public Administration Management Fellowship Program and associated positions, as approved in the budget. It also established the Unit Charge for the 2018 Solid Waste Annual Fee, which remains at \$55.00 per unit.

A public hearing was scheduled for the Legislature’s next meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m., on a proposed Local Law that would repeal the Local Law that had authorized override of the County’s Tax Levy Limit for 2018. The approved 2018 Budget did not exceed the Tax Levy Limit; eliminating need for the prior law.

The Legislature awarded \$79,650 in Fall 2017 Community Celebrations, Tourism Project, New Tourism Initiative, and Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants, as advised by the County’s Strategic Tourism Planning Board and funded through County Room Occupancy Tax Revenues. \$28,000 in Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding was also approved for the History Center in Tompkins County in support of the Tompkins Center for History and Culture project.