



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **March 20, 2018** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **New Three-Year Contract Approved with White Collar Employees**

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused), ratified a new three-year bargaining agreement with the County's White Collar employees, Civil Service Employees Association, the County's largest employee union. The agreement, retroactive to January 1, which runs through the end of 2020, increases base pay by 2% each year, and also increases annual employee Longevity payments—providing, in part, an annual Longevity payment of \$500 for employees with at least five years of service, beginning in 2019. Longevity payments for employees who have completed ten or more years of service are also increased under the contract. Members of the employee union have already ratified the agreement. By policy of the Legislature, the County's Confidential employees are also covered under provisions of the White Collar agreement.

Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee Chair Michael Lane praised the bargaining committees, for both management and labor, for their hard work which produced the agreement.

In a separate action, the Legislature, also without dissent, established salary and benefit adjustments for County Management employees in line with provisions negotiated by the CSEA White Collar unit, retroactive to January 1 of this year.

*Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 844-8440.*

#### **Legislature Formalizes Support for LEAD Program**

The Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused), passed a resolution of support for development of a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, in collaboration with the City of Ithaca and community representatives. The measure authorizes County Administrator Jason Molino to execute a Memorandum of Understanding governing development of the program.

The long-discussed program gives police officers discretionary authority to divert individuals who would otherwise be charged with low-level offenses to services, rather than arrest. Public Safety Committee Chair Rich John said the LEAD program "is really a change in the way in which police agencies are approaching policing... This will give a choice to divert a person under certain circumstances, essentially addressing the repetitive, low-level criminal offenses that you see putting people into the criminal justice system and the jail." Mr. John said he sees LEAD as a very positive development, in the context of the jail, "taking people out of the criminal justice system and putting them on a better pathway, if we can." The program will be initiated in the City first, he said, and is expected to later be expanded. The County will be involved immediately, he said, since most of the services to be provided are County services.

*Contact: Richard John, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 256-9794*

#### **Legislature Backs State Food Rescue and Recycling Legislation**

By unanimous vote, the Legislature went on record in support of State legislation proposed by Governor Cuomo to require large-scale generators of food waste to donate and recycle excess food, in line with the federal Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused.) The resolution notes that the proposed legislation is consistent with County values and practices, where the County's Department of Recycling and Materials Management already operates and is expanding programs to reduce and recycle food waste, and the

non-profit Friendship Donations Network re-routes nearly half-a-million pounds of food each year, to feed people in need.

Recycling and Materials Management Director Barbara Eckstrom told Legislators, "This will be fitting into our overall plans for the next ten years. I applaud the State for doing this.....I am hearing very positive things on what could be happening from this legislation."

*Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243; Recycling and Materials Management Director Barbara Eckstrom, 273-6632.*

### **Legislature Supports Internet Sales Tax Measure as Part of the State Budget**

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislator Glenn Morey was excused), expressed its formal support for inclusion of the Internet Fairness Conformity Act in the 2018 New York State Budget. The provision would expand jurisdiction over online retailers, requiring them to collect NYS sales tax even if they do not maintain a physical presence or employees working in New York State. The measure has drawn strong support from the New York State Association of Counties, and, according to County Finance Director Rick Snyder, also from county treasurers and finance directors from across the state. It is estimated that nearly \$160 million of new revenue for the State and local governments would be collected each year. Noting that this issue was one of NYSAC's top priorities in its legislative agenda, Legislature Chair Martha Robertson pointed out that this would not be a new tax, but would simply be collecting the sales tax already due.

*Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 844-8440.*

Among other business,

The Legislature authorized the County to execute a construction funding agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation for reimbursement of County expenses for safety improvements at the Coddington/Burns Road/East King Road intersection in the Town of Ithaca, approving allocation of up-front funding of full project cost, and making available \$1,371,000 within the Capital Project account to cover the project. Estimated County share of the cost is \$137,100.

History Center Director Rod Howe provided an update on the status of plans, and a visual tour of the Tompkins Center for History and Culture, to be located in what is now the Main Office of the Tompkins Trust Company, the building to be acquired by the County, effective when the Trust Company vacates the building to relocate to its new downtown headquarters this spring.

Finance Director Rick Snyder presented the County Sales Tax reports for January and February, the preliminary, non-reconciled figures showing a year-to-date increase in receipts of 5.08% compared to a year ago.

**- END -**