



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **June 5, 2018** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Accepts State Airport Grant

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, accepted the \$14.2 million Upstate Airport Development Grant recently awarded by New York State and committed to assuming full responsibility for all additional project costs. The project will expand the terminal by approximately one-third, update terminal systems, and enhance security, as well as construct a federal customs inspection facility. The solar-powered airport will employ a new geothermal heat pump system, with solar covered parking constructed as part of the project.

While total cost was projected two years ago at just over \$22 million, Airport Director Mike Hall, in a detailed presentation to the Legislature, reported that current 2018 cost projections have increased the estimated total cost to \$24.8 million, increasing the anticipated local share to 10.5 million (from \$7.8 million). Director Hall said \$2.5 million in Airport revenue, from federal sources and the Airport fund balance, is already committed and that the remaining \$8 million County obligation can be supported through pending potential grant proceeds and financing based on Airport passenger facility charges.

There were a number of questions from Legislators regarding financial aspects, including such factors as projected operating costs of a larger facility, projected revenue, potential costs, cash flow dynamics, how passenger facility charges work, and what might be needed in terms of potential use of Airport fund balance or debt service. County Administrator Jason Molino told Legislators, "I think you have the best estimate you can have based on the information you have," that he feels comfortable and confident in moving forward. Legislator Rich John said, "This is a very forward-looking project that will project an image that Tompkins County is a place to come to." While Director Hall continued to stress that this project is the result of an effective team effort, Legislator Deborah Dawson told him, "This was your vision in the beginning, and I want to thank you for that." Construction is expected to begin later this year, and must be completed by the fall of 2019.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, special Transportation Committee, 844-8440; Airport Director Mike Hall, 279-2662.

Legislature Urges State Insurance Law Be Amended to Expand Participation in Municipal Cooperative Health Benefit Plans

By unanimous vote, the Legislature urged Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to amend State Insurance Law to allow public libraries, urban renewal agencies, and certain other quasi-governmental organizations to join a municipal cooperative health benefit plan.

The measure, introduced by Legislator Mike Sigler, notes that, as part of the State's county-wide shared services initiative last year, the Governor encouraged panels to consider insurance purchasing cooperatives in their shared service plans; that health insurance costs are among the fastest growing costs for local governments; and that counties have for several years advocated for the ability to create municipal health insurance consortiums to jointly self-fund their health plans at a significantly lower cost for taxpayers. Noting that organizations such as public libraries serve an important purpose in communities, the resolution states that allowing such organizations to join health consortiums would allow for more efficient use of taxpayer funds and delivery of services, and may in turn reduce costs for property taxpayers. Only one municipal health consortium (our Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium) has formed since 1991, when Article 47 of State Insurance Law permitting such consortiums, was enacted.

Contact: Legislator Mike Sigler, 339-7978; County Administrator Jason Molino, 274-5551.

Legislature Funds Planner/Developer for Child Care Network Initiative

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, appropriated \$25,000 in Contingent funding to provide start-up funding for a part-time Child Care Planner/Developer position at the Child Development Council. The position will coordinate a Group Family Child Care Network, which will provide administrative supports to help keep existing day care programs open and to help new sites and providers to become established. In part, the planner will initiate discussions with workforce development officials and employers, as well as with housing developers to seek facilities design provisions that would accommodate and encourage inclusion of group family child care homes.

The Department of Social Services is authorized to execute a one-year contract with the Child Development Council for such development services. During the 2018 budget process, \$50,000 in multi-year funding was approved, and set aside in the Contingent Fund, to improve child care options. The \$25,000 allocated covers the first six months of the year-long agreement. Chair Martha Robertson praised the project approach as “creative and visionary.”

Contact: Shawna Black, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 351-7855

Legislature Supports Legislation to Permit Appropriation of County Funds for Affordable Housing

The Legislature, without dissent, urged passage of proposed State home rule legislation, introduced by Senator Tom O’Mara, to amend the section of New York State County Law to permit Tompkins County use local funds and contract with other entities to develop, maintain and manage affordable housing. That action follows up an earlier request by the Legislature for sponsorship of such State legislation. The legislation would add a new subdivision to the section of County Law permitting such use, an action that has also been supported by the New York State Association of Counties.

Contact: Legislature Chair Martha Robertson, Chair of the special Housing Committee, 274-5434 or 592-3119.

Funds Appropriated for Two Natural Infrastructure Projects

The Legislature appropriated funds from the County’s Natural Infrastructure Capital Project to support two drainage-related projects in the Town of Ithaca—\$3,000 for the Dubois Road Ditch Stormwater Improvement Project and \$7,000 to support the Public Works Facility Stormwater Improvement Project, at the County’s Public Works Facility on Bostwick Road. The goal of the Natural Infrastructure project is to reduce risks of flooding and protect public and private water supplies.

The Dubois Road project includes installation of a subsurface drain and check dam system, designed to slow and filter water in a road ditch prior to entering a tributary to Cayuga Lake. It is hoped the technique could eventually be utilized by highway and public works departments in the county. The Public Works facility project will help support a rain garden project at the southeast corner of the facility’s parking lot, designed to receive stormwater from the lot prior to entering the Bostwick Road ditch.

Contact: Anna Kelles, Chair, Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee, 342-2036; Scott Doyle, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability, 274-5560.

Among other business

The Legislature approved the appointment of John Guttridge as an At-Large member of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency and the Tompkins County Development Corporation, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Grace Chiang, and serving through the end of 2018.

Chair Martha Robertson, as recommended by the County’s Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee, proclaimed June 2018 **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual+ (LGBTQIA+) Pride Month** in Tompkins County, calling upon all members of the community to join in celebrating the contributions of our LGBTQIA+ residents, and renewing the commitment and actions to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists. Chair Robertson directed that the Pride/Rainbow Flag shall be flown on the County’s flagpole during Pride Month as a symbol of our steadfast belief in the equal dignity of all Tompkins County residents.

The Legislature awarded Elmira Structures, Inc. the contract for construction of a Food Scraps Transfer Building at the Department of Recycling and Materials Management for its submitted bid of \$436,600. The Department was awarded a \$355,000 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Climate Smart Communities grant to construct the building, for transfer of source-separated food scraps for composting.

The Legislature authorized the Department of Social Services to enter into a one-year agreement with the Child Development Council to provide funds to reimburse summer camp providers for costs related to providing newly mandated online training for day care providers, which is required to qualify for the day care subsidy programs. \$26,000 was allocated to support the expense.

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