



Inclusion Through Diversity

Marcia E. Lynch, Public Information Officer
607-274-5555, Office
607-227-2152, Cell
October 16, 2018
TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **October 16, 2018** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislators Adopt Amendments to 2019 Recommended Budget

The Tompkins County Legislature, by unanimous vote, formally adopted amendments to the County Administrator's 2019 Recommended Budget and the Capital Program for the next five years, as recommended by the Expanded Budget Committee.

Before the vote, Legislators made one additional amendment to the budget, advanced by Chair Martha Robertson, which moved into Contingency a one-time-funded \$62,000 allocation to Cooperative Extension to support a space expansion project, using shipping containers, to increase storage and classroom space. The amendment, which had failed by a tie 7-7 vote at the last Expanded Budget Committee, this time was approved 8-6—with Robertson changing her vote from no to yes (Legislators Anna Kelles, Michael Lane, Anne Koreman, Glenn Morey, and Dan Klein voted no.) Robertson said that, as a measure of transparency and accountability, she would like to see a detailed plan and more financial details and have the Legislature give final authorization at that point.

The amended budget would increase the County tax levy 1.54%, which compares to 1.43% in the Administrator's budget and is lower than the Legislature's 2.2% levy goal for 2019. The recommended county-wide average tax rate of \$6.40 per thousand, 18 cents less than 2018, is a decrease of 2.64%, representing an increase of \$13.90 in the tax bill for the median-valued \$185,000 home. The amended Tentative Budget also contains a \$3 increase in the County's annual Solid Waste Fee, to \$58. Tompkins County's State-calculated 2019 Tax Cap is just under 5%.

Chair Martha Robertson thanked Administrator Jason Molino and staff for their expertise and hard work in guiding the Legislature through the budget process and Budget Chair Michael Lane for his leadership. Legislator Leslyn McBean-Clairborne also recognized department heads and staff for their role in the process.

The amended package, now known as the Tentative Budget, replaces Administrator Jason Molino's recommended budget as the basis of budget deliberations, and will be sent on to public hearing Tuesday, October 30, 7:00 p.m., at Legislature Chambers in the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street (second floor), Ithaca. The Legislature's final budget adoption vote is scheduled November 8, and changes may still be made prior to final adoption.

The Recommended Budget, all amendments to the Recommended Budget, and other information regarding the 2019 budget process, are available for review online at the County website at www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov/ctyadmin/2019budget.

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

Bonding Authorized, if Needed, for Local Share of Airport Expansion Project

Legislators, by unanimous vote, authorized bonding, if needed to support the local share of the \$24.7 million terminal expansion project at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. The action authorizes the issuance of up to

\$10 million in serial bonds and notes, as needed, for underwriting the expense not funded through the \$14.4 million New York State grant awarded through the State's Upstate Airport Revitalization Program.

Before the vote, Transportation Committee Chair Michael Lane noted that the amount to be authorized is the maximum that could be anticipated, that local share is hoped to be largely grant-funded, and that any bonding the County would have to do would be supported through Airport Passenger Facility Charge revenue.

Prior to approving the bonding authorization, Legislators, also by unanimous vote, approved a State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) resolution related to the Airport project, which declares Tompkins County the Lead Agency for the project, adopts the findings of the Environmental Assessment Form, and pledges that, according to the EAF findings, the project will not result in any significant adverse impacts to the environment.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Transportation Committee, 844-8440.

Bonding Approved for Road and Bridge Construction

Legislators, by two unanimous votes, authorized the issuance of up to \$200,000 in Serial Bonds and Notes to pay a portion of the cost of repair and replacement of certain existing bridges, and up to \$1.6 million in bonds and notes to pay a portion of the cost of road and highway system reconstruction and improvements.

Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 564-7243

Schelley Michell-Nunn Appointed to Tompkins Cortland Community College Board of Trustees

The Legislature, by motion, unanimously approved the appointment of Schelley Michell-Nunn to the Tompkins Cortland Community College Board of Trustees, filling the unexpired term of Chad Coates. Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee Chair Michael Lane said Michell-Nunn was one of four very strong applicants for the position, comes to the position with strong experience in academics, business, and government, and "has a very keen interest in the college and helping it move forward." Her trustee term runs through June 30, 2021.

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

Preliminary Step Authorized Leading to Eventual Development of Regional Detention Facility

The Legislature, without dissent, authorized Tompkins County to enter into an intermunicipal agreement to form a Local Development Corporation for the joint establishment of a Specialized Secure Detention Facility to comply with "Raise the Age" laws, which increased the age of criminal responsibility beginning this month.

Tompkins County is part of an 11-county coalition seeking to establish the Specialized Secure Detention Facility for the greater Southern Tier. The intermunicipal agreement involving the 11 counties is the first step toward creating the LDC, which will recommend how to develop, establish, operate, maintain, and fund such a facility. It also authorizes the County Administrator or his designee to represent the County on the committee charged with formation of the LDC. Participation in the Agreement does not bind the County to contribute funds toward acquisition or construction of the detention facility.

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

Among other business,

The Legislature adopted a revised Tompkins County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, to comply with newly passed provisions of New York State Law. The new policy, which was preliminarily enacted by the County Administrator on October 9, is consistent with the language and procedure specified in the new State law.

During privilege of the floor, Enfield resident Robert Lynch, who last year raised concerns about the County's sale of the Old Library, voiced health and safety concern about buyer Travis-Hyde's impending plans for demolition, recently disclosed in the media, specifically related to asbestos abatement—reported plans to demolish the building without first removing the asbestos, instead spraying water over the materials to keep dust down. In response to legislator questions, Administrator Jason Molino indicated he will look into the matter.

- END -