



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **April 2, 2019** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Receives Report on Tioga Street Property

The Legislature received a full report on the County's examination of properties located on the 400 block of North Tioga Street in Ithaca, as county government looks at whether the adjoining parcels, located at 408, and 412-414 North Tioga, might be acquired to enable the County meet its office space and parking needs. The Legislature late last year authorized the County to enter into a four-month purchase option on the property, which expires later this month. The issue now before the Legislature is whether to exercise the County's option to acquire the property.

County Administrator Jason Molino's more than hour-long presentation on the County's ongoing feasibility study analysis, conducted with the assistance of HOLT Architects, was an updated and in-depth version of briefings delivered twice before to the Legislature's Facilities and Infrastructure Committee. The feasibility study's primary goal is to review the current and future needs of individual departments and consolidate a number of County offices into a single location to maximize efficiencies and remove or reduce lease payments.

Potential scenarios evaluated in the Study have increased to ten, which now include two primary office clustering options. The first would consolidate multiple County offices scattered across downtown into a new three-story building on North Tioga (37,000 s.f.), with the planned substantial renovation of the Old Jail building to retain existing offices. The second would consolidate into the new building those scattered downtown offices and would also relocate to the building offices currently located in the Old Jail—increasing building size to 46,000 s.f. and essentially returning to the Center of Government concept evaluated seven years ago. In addition, the design scenarios set out various options to expand parking options (an additional 25-42 spaces), and several include residential redevelopment options (one to five units of affordable housing) along Sears Street.

Total project cost (with design to LEED Silver standards) is projected at \$18.55 million to \$19.55 million, which includes new building development cost of \$12.8 to 14.5 million, land acquisition cost, and cost of related renovation to other buildings. Project financing would include sale of Sears Street land and the Annex C Building, the 2019 budget appropriation for the Old Jail renovation, and fund balance from the Capital Fund and General Fund. Needed bonding of approximately \$9 million would be supported by the County's annual capital contribution.

Administrator Molino concludes that the North Tioga/Sears Street parcels can easily support a new building of sufficient size to meeting the County's needs, that the project has additional parking and/or residential development options, and that the County can financially support the project as part of its capital plan.

The Legislature's Facilities and Infrastructure, and Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committees will review the project in joint session April 10th, with the Legislature scheduled to consider a purchase resolution April 16th.
Contact: County Administrator Jason Molino, 274-5551.

New Local Law Authorizes Best Value Purchasing

Following a public hearing, the Legislature by unanimous vote (Legislator Rich John was excused) adopted a new Local Law that authorizes the use of the “best value awards process” as authorized by New York State General Municipal Law. The Local Law provides additional procurement options to the County that may expedite the procurement process and result in cost savings. “Best value” indicates that criteria other than price may be considered when determining a bid, request for proposal, or request for qualification award—examples include lower cost of maintenance, durability, higher quality, and longer product life, based on objective, quantifiable analysis. The basis for determination may also identify factors such as small business, or certified minority- or women-owned business enterprises as defined in New York State Executive Law. The law also opens the opportunity for the County to “piggyback” on bids led by national cooperatives and other government agencies that have awarded contracts through the best value method, if found to be in the best interests of the County and County taxpayers, opening procurement options which previously had been unavailable.

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

Legislature Urges New York State to Extend Access Line Surcharge

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislators Rich John and Leslyn McBean-Clairborne were excused), requested that the Governor and State Legislature enact legislation to amend New York State County Law to extend Tompkins County’s authorization to increase the E-911 surcharge on telephone landlines up to an amount not to exceed \$1.00 per line per month. Revenue from the surcharge is directed to pay for costs of maintaining and operating the County’s emergency communications system.

In 2009, the Governor and State Legislature enacted home rule legislation (with a “sunset” expiration after ten years) which authorized Tompkins County to increase its E-911 surcharge to \$1.00 per line (higher than the 35 cent standard amount.) That authorization will soon expire. The additional 65 cents per month generates approximately \$185,000 annually. While the supplemental \$0.65 surcharge was intended to help pay for bonding Tompkins County’s \$21 million interoperable public safety communications system, “the need for a continued funding stream to support the system and related capital and operational costs does not sunset,” noted Emergency Response Director Brian Robison in a briefing memo to County legislators. He said the loss of \$185,000 in landline surcharge revenue would negatively affect the Department of Emergency Response budget, and would require cuts to operating lines and service and/or an increase of property taxes.

Contact: Henry Granison, Vice Chair, Public Safety Committee, 342-8643; Brian Robison, Interim Director of Emergency Response, 257-3888.

Grant Funds Accepted to Develop County Resiliency and Recovery Plan

The Legislature, by unanimous vote (Legislator Rich John was excused) authorized acceptance of \$93,750 in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Federal funds, administered by the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, and \$160,000 in funding from the New York State Department of State to develop the Tompkins County Resiliency and Recovery Plan. As described in a briefing memo to the Legislature from Associate Planner Scott Doyle, the County is merging support through the two grant programs “to develop a robust Resiliency and Recovery Plan for Tompkins County,” in order to better prepare Tompkins County for future disasters and to speed economic recovery post-disaster.

The Resiliency and Recovery Plan will update the County’s Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, and will address several actions identified as high priority in the 2014 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Actions include inventorying and assessment of critical assets in floodplains; conducting a local water supply drought impact analysis; developing education programs and tools for post-disaster recovery planning; developing a local debris management plan; and providing support to interested municipalities to enroll in FEMA’s Community Rating System (CRS). The Legislature’s Planning, Energy, and Economic Development Committee has authorized issuance of a Request for Proposals for consulting services to prepare the Tompkins County Resiliency and Recovery Plan.

Contact: Associate Planner Scott Doyle, Department of Planning and Sustainability, 274-5560; Deborah Dawson, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 351-8689

Among other business,

As part of the Municipal Housing Affordability Grant Program, the Legislature authorized an award of \$10,000 to the Town of Lansing to support traffic studies required for the development of affordable housing in the Town's Town Center development area at Auburn Road and Woodsedge Drive. The Town of Lansing has committed \$6,000 of local funding and additional in-kind services.

The Legislature awarded more than \$220,000 in the Spring 2019 round of Tourism Program and Community Celebrations Grants, as recommended by the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board and funded through County hotel Room Occupancy Tax revenue.

New England Waste Services of N.Y., Inc. (Casella) was awarded a five-year contract for waste hauling and disposal services (through April 30, 2024), at a base cost of \$49 per Ton of waste

The Legislature appropriated \$10,350 for dedicatory plaques and signage for County buildings—including plaques and signage for the Daniel D. Tompkins Building and Legislature; and the County Human Services Annex, as well as plaques noting County poets laureate and an Underground Railroad historical plaque at the Human Services Annex.

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