



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **May 21, 2019** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Additional Support Approved for Community Outreach Worker Program

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, appropriated \$25,000 from the County's Contingent Fund to provide additional support for the Community Outreach Worker Program. The program, operated through Family and Children's Service of Ithaca and jointly funded by the County, City of Ithaca, and Downtown Ithaca Alliance, with additional support from Cayuga Medical Center, was established four years ago to address potential conflicts in the downtown Ithaca area—engaging people with a kind attitude and supporting a welcoming and inclusive downtown environment. Since the program's inception in 2015, the County has allocated \$20,000 each year as its share of support for one community outreach worker to respond to and address potential issues.

Asked to support expansion of the program to two outreach workers to meet an increased case management need, the Legislature during the 2019 County Budget process set aside the \$25,000 in contingency, to be released after a review of program operations, which has occurred over the past several months. F&CS proposed hiring a second outreach worker to stabilize the current workload in the downtown corridor. The Legislature's action increases the County's total 2019 appropriation to \$45,000 which, along with a \$45,000 contribution from the City and \$30,000 from the Downtown Alliance, will underwrite a second community outreach worker for the remainder of 2019. County Administrator Jason Molino cautions, however, that an additional \$15,000 from the County (to a total appropriation of \$60,000) would be required from the County to fully fund the second position during 2020. That issue will be part of the 2020 budget discussion.

Legislator Rich John was one who praised the collaborative review process that led to this decision. "It's been a long time coming," he said, and thanked his colleagues for their work on the steering committee. "It's important that we have the more formalized oversight. I think that is a very positive addition to this program," he said.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Government Operations; and Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committees, 607-844-8440; County Administrator Jason Molino, 607-274-5551.

NYSDOT Grant Accepted to Support Airport Fuel Farm Relocation

The Legislature, without dissent, authorized acceptance of a \$1.5 million grant from the New York State Department of Transportation to help finance relocation of the Fuel Farm at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. The grant, awarded under NYSDOT's AIR99 program, will support relocation of the fuel facility from its current location within the Airport's general aviation apron area to an area further north on airport property, increasing safety and enabling shared use of the facility by other municipalities, include NYSDOT. \$400,000 from the Airport Fund Balance (revenue from the \$840,000 the Airport received from sale of Airport land to NYSDOT for its new residency) also will be applied to the project.

Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 607-564-7243; Airport Director Mike Hall, 607-279-2662.

Lansing Parcel Added to County Agricultural District 1

After a public hearing, the Legislature, by unanimous vote, approved the addition of 525 Acres of land, owned by Dale Mattoon and located at 317 Auburn Road in Lansing, to Tompkins County Agricultural District 1, as recommended by the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. The AFPB found that the parcel consists of predominantly "viable agricultural land," as defined in State Agriculture and Markets Law,

and that inclusion of the parcel would serve the public interest by assisting in maintaining a viable agricultural industry within the district. Four people spoke at the public hearing, among them Monika Roth of Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, who called it “a significant request” and a “cornerstone” that provides protection to other farms in the northern part of Lansing.

Contact: Deborah Dawson, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 607-351-8689.

Legislature Supports “HALT Act”

Acting on a measure advanced by Legislator Shawna Black, the Legislature went on record in support of the proposed Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Isolated Confinement (HALT) Act, now before the New York State Senate and Assembly. The vote was 12-0, with Legislator Dan Klein abstaining (Mr. Klein is a seasonal employee of the NYS Department of Corrections.) The measure, in part, calls the conditions of isolated confinement “inhumane and dangerous”, states that New York utilizes long-term isolated confinement at rates well above the national average, and cites racial and ethnic overrepresentation inside confinement units, as well as in our nation’s prisons in general. The Legislature heard four expressions of public support for passage.

The resolution notes that the HALT Act “would limit the time an inmate can spend in isolated confinement or residential rehabilitation units, end the isolated confinement of vulnerable people, restrict the criteria that can result in such confinement, improve conditions of confinement, and create more human and effective alternatives to such confinement.”

Contact: Legislator Shawna Black, 607-351-7855.

Lease-Sublease Agreement Approved to Finance Cooperative Extension Capital Project

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, authorized a lease-sublease agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County to finance a \$350,000 capital improvement at Extension’s facility at 615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca. The arrangement has been used in the past to finance CCE capital improvements. Under the arrangement, the County will make a \$350,000 lump sum payment to the CCE (pursuant to the Lease) and the CCE will make semi-annual payments to the County (pursuant to the Sublease) through July 2028. While the NYS Constitution prohibits application of municipal funds for non-governmental purposes, NYS County Law describes a county extension service, such as CCE, as a “subordinate governmental agency,” and specifically authorizes a county to support and maintain its extension service, which may include provision of space in a County facility, through lease or otherwise. The leasehold arrangement enables the County to issue its obligations to pay for the improvements, and CCE to reimburse the County for the lump sum payment to CCE.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 607-844-8440.

Among other business,

The Legislature approved a procedural resolution endorsing home rule bills introduced on behalf of the County in the New York State Senate and Assembly to amend NYS County Law to allow Tompkins County to extend its additional \$0.65 surcharge on telephone access lines. Current authorization, approved ten years ago, will sunset at the end of 2019.

After a public hearing, the Legislature approved a new Local Law amending Chapter 32 of the Tompkins County Code. The law inserts two subsections (regarding private and future employment) that were inadvertently omitted when the Code was last amended.

The Legislature set July 16th, 5:30 p.m., as date for a public hearing on the 2019-2020 Tompkins Cortland Community College recommended operating budget. The hearing will be held at Legislature Chamber, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca.

The Legislature also scheduled a public hearing June 4, 5:30 p.m., at Legislature Chambers, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca, regarding the Legislature’s standard Local Law to authorize the Legislature to override the County’s fiscal 202 tax levy limit, if exceeding the tax cap is deemed necessary in preparation of the 2020 Tompkins County Budget.