



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **June 4, 2019** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Legislature Urges State Passage of Comprehensive Climate Legislation**

The Tompkins County Legislature approved a resolution urging the New York State Legislature and Governor Cuomo to pass comprehensive climate legislation during the 2019 legislative term. The vote was 12-1, with Legislator Mike Sigler voting no; Legislator Michael Lane was out of the room and excused from the vote.) The measure refers to two separate legislative initiatives currently under review in Senate and Assembly, the New York State Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA) and the New York State Climate Leadership Act (CLA).

The resolution notes that the CCPA, in part, would establish a State goal of reducing greenhouse gas emission levels by 100% of 1990 levels by 2050, with a 50% reduction by 2030; and that the CCLA would require creation of an energy roadmap to identify and recommend regulatory measures, clean energy programs, and other state actions to achieve a 40% GGE reduction goal by 2030 and carbon neutrality goals. The purpose of both proposed acts is consistent with Tompkins County's energy goals, as set forth in its Comprehensive Plan and numerous other County initiatives, the resolution notes

The measure urges that the Senate and Assembly, and the Governor "to enact into law as soon as possible a comprehensive climate protection act, ideally one that combines the most effective provisions of both the Climate and Community Protection Act and the Climate Leadership Act," and that they, as well as the executive agencies that oversee implementation "closely monitor its efficacy and take prompt future action to amend and improve it as relevant scientific advances suggest."

Legislator Sigler said that, while he supports actions to address climate change, he was voting no because he is sick of all the discussion of goals and the verbiage—in this case, an 18-paragraph resolution. He said the message is simple: "Stop burning fossil fuels," which will require sacrifice, and that what needs to be done are actions such as shipping more power downstate, where it's needed, and investing in hydropower. "This county is way ahead of the state," he said. Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee Chair Deborah Dawson responded that if it were that simple, "we would have done it a long time ago... You can't just flip a switch." Chair Martha Robertson said, "We don't make state policy; we make county policy. What we see here is the first step to create a state policy... This is a political statement, just saying, 'Pass something this session.'" *Contact: Deborah Dawson, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 351-8689; Legislator Mike Sigler, 607-339-7978.*

#### **Legislators Act on Three BridgeNY-Funded Projects**

The Legislature took several necessary actions to proceed with three bridge replacement projects funded under this year's New York State BridgeNY program. Without dissent, the Legislature approved a funding agreements with the NYS Department of Transportation for replacement of the Central Chapel Road Bridge over Boice Creek in the Town of Caroline and replacement of the Etna Lane Bridge over Fall Creek in the Town of Dryden; approving design service contracts with LaBella Associates for the Central Chapel Road Bridge replacement, and with Barton & Loguidice for the Etna Lane Bridge project, authorizing amendment of the five-year Capital Program to incorporate both projects. The Legislature appropriated total cost of just over \$1.2

million for the Central Chapel Road Bridge project (anticipated local cost after reimbursement: \$60,347), and just over \$2 million for the Etna Lane Bridge project (anticipated local cost after reimbursement: \$101,847).

The Legislature also approved a funding agreement between the County and the Town of Ulysses and amended the County's Capital Program, for a third BridgeNY project, replacement of the Cemetery Road Bridge over Trumansburg Creek. The Town of Ulysses has been awarded the NYSDOT funding for this project (total cost: \$981,850). Through the approved agreement, Tompkins County agrees to pay the 5% local share: \$49,093, an amount that it is noted represents significant capital savings over the typical 20% local share for a typical bridge replacement project.

*Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 607-564-7243; Highway Director Jeff Smith, 607-274-0300.*

### **Shared Services Panel Takes Comment Toward Development of 2020 Shared Services Plan**

Prior to the Legislature meeting, the Tompkins County Shared Services Panel, convened by County Administrator Jason Molino, took public comment regarding shared services to be included in the County's 2020 Shared Services Plan. The session is the first of three public hearings to be held on the topic.

City of Ithaca resident William Bryant addressed the hearing, urging the Panel to look at governmental consolidations to achieve economies of scale, examining what he called "the balkanization of our county into jurisdictions." Consolidated government would be more efficient and effective, he said, identifying highway maintenance and construction as one place where services could be consolidated. One initiative he suggested was County takeover of all bridges in the county not on state highways, including bridges in the City of Ithaca. Financial services and taxation, as well as insurance services, are other areas where consolidation should be considered, he said.

Future public hearings on the Shared Services Plan are scheduled on June 27 and July 25, 2019, 5:00 p.m., at County Legislature Chambers, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca.

*Contact: County Administrator Jason Molino, 607-274-5551.*

Among other business,

The Legislature, following a public hearing, adopted the Local Law, as it has done each year, that authorizes the Legislature to override the tax levy limit for 2020, should that be deemed necessary as part of the County's 2020 Budget process. Approval came by a party-line vote of 11-3 (Republican Legislators Mike Sigler, Dave McKenna, and Glenn Morey voting no.) Adoption of the law gives the Legislature the flexibility in exceeding the Property Tax Cap, and to ensure that any State recalculation of the applicable limit will not make the County inadvertently out of compliance.

Finance Director Rick Snyder provided the sales tax distribution summary for the month of April, reporting that the County's year-to-date receipts (as shown by non-reconciled figures) are 2.6% above April 2018.

As Tompkins County's Compliance Officer, Deputy County Administrator Lisa Holmes provided Legislators the annual Compliance Program Progress Report from the County's Compliance Committee.

**- END -**