



Inclusion Through Diversity

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TWO PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **July 16, 2019** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Fund Balance Appropriation Authorized for TC3; Public Hearing Rescheduled Regarding 2019-2020 Operating Budget

The Legislature, by a vote of 12-1 (Legislator Deborah Dawson voted no; Legislator Rich John was excused) approved use by Tompkins Cortland Community College of \$300,000 in balance to help address a revenue shortfall in the College's operating budget for the current fiscal year. Projected enrollment for 2018-2019 is less than budgeted, causing tuition revenues to be lower than planned. As of the end of May, the College's available fund balance stood at nearly \$1.2 million.

Legislators also scheduled a public hearing August 6th, 5:30 p.m. on the TC3 2019-2020 Operating Budget. The hearing will be held at County Legislature Chambers, located at the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, 121 E. Court Street, Ithaca. The hearing had initially been scheduled for the July 16th meeting, but was rescheduled due to its inadvertent omission from the meeting agenda. Action on the Operating Budget is expected at the Legislature's August 20th meeting.

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

Health Department Recognized for Innovative Public Health Projects

Representatives of the Tompkins County Health Department briefed Legislators on nationwide recognition the department has received for two of its collaborative projects, in a presentation by Community Health Nurse Rachel Buckwalter and Public Health Preparedness Coordinator Nina Saeli.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), at their 2019 annual conference, conferred two of the 53 Model Practice Awards to the Tompkins County Health Department. The Model Practice awards are a competitive peer reviewed recognition for innovative programs and projects that have demonstrated success in improving the health and safety of a community.

Of the over 150 application submissions, NACCHO chose the "Ithaca College Public Health Initiatives" as one of the top 10 "best of the best" Model Practices. The purpose of the initiatives is to enable Ithaca College to independently respond to a public health emergency in order to mitigate loss of health and/or life to Ithaca College students, faculty and staff; thus making Ithaca College a critical public health resource. Although other colleges and universities may be collaborating with local health department on mass vaccination and dispensing planning and exercise, Ithaca College's incorporation of student trained public health responders differentiates their public health preparedness efforts from other colleges and universities across the nation.

The Health Department's Community Health Services division has successfully partnered with Family Treatment Court and the Department of Social Services to provide SafeCare®, an evidence-based behavioral parent-training program, to parents of children ages 0-5 who have been reported for child neglect due to parental substance abuse. Trained Community Health Nurses provide SafeCare® to families during home visits over the course of 18 weeks, using a structured curriculum focusing on Child Health, Home Safety, and Parent-Child Interaction. During the first three years of implementation, families who completed SafeCare® had a high reunification rate of 82% (an increase from the previous rate of 42%).

Contact: Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director, 607-274-6600.

Legislature Authorizes Purchase of Necessary Equipment for Early Voting

The Legislature, without dissent (Legislator Rich John was excused), authorized purchase of equipment necessary to implement Early Voting in Tompkins County, as now directed by New York State. The Early Voting Act, passed at the beginning of this year, requires nine consecutive days of early voting prior to any General, Primary, or Special Election, beginning with this year's General Election in November. The nearly \$250,000 allocation, to be funded through State aid (some of it coming from the Board of Elections' "Help America Vote Act" fund balance) will purchase Electronic Poll Books and other equipment necessary to implement Early Voting, including first-year activation and data fees. The Board of Elections' Fiscal Target is also increased by more than \$15,000 to cover such expenses beginning with the 2020 Budget.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 607-844-8440.

Legislature Takes Comment on Proposed Charter Amendment Concerning Office of Human Rights and Human Rights Commission

The Legislature held a public hearing on a proposed Local Law that would amend Article 26 of the County Charter regarding the County's Office of Human Rights and Human Rights Commission. The amendment would implement wording changes, including those to reflect current practice which does not include investigatory or enforcement activities. Three people spoke. One of them, Human Rights Commission member Kirby Edmonds, suggested incorporating additional wording, which he said would better communicate the focus on promoting protection of human rights, as well as promoting equity. Review of the proposed Charter amendment will continue, with legislative action expected at the earliest at the Legislature's August 6th meeting.

Contact: Shawna Black, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 607-351-7855; Michael Lane, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 607-844-8440.

Legislature Accepts Audited Financial Report for 2018

The Legislature, by unanimous vote, accepted the audited Financial Report for Tompkins County for the fiscal year 2018, conducted by the audit firm of Insero & Co. CPAs, LLP. As part of a comprehensive report to the Legislature, Finance Director Rick Snyder indicated the County received an "unmodified opinion" from the auditors, the highest possible ranking, with no material instances of noncompliance and no material internal control weaknesses found.

Contact: Finance Director Rick Snyder. 607=274-5544.

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