



Inclusion Through Diversity

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **August 20, 2019** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Public Safety Building Conditions Assessment Approved

The Legislature authorized the County to move ahead with a Conditions and Program Needs Assessment of the Tompkins County Public Safety Building, by unanimous vote authorizing the County to contract with LaBella Associates and allocate \$74,000 from the Contingent Fund to support the study, services to be billed per hour at a cost not to exceed the \$74,000 amount.

The study will evaluate architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life safety, and security and control systems; investigate feasibility for carbon mitigation; assess the facility's below-grade sanitary sewer piping; and review and identify any suspect regulated building materials. Public Safety Committee Chair Rich John noted that the idea is to look at the building's present condition and seek to determine a direction on whether existing facilities should be upgraded or whether to construct a new building.

Prior to adjournment, Legislators renewed discussion of the issue, specifically related to a property located at 767 Warren Road, adjacent to Airport property and near the current Public Safety Building, which has been toured by others including the Sheriff, and considered by some as a potential location for the Road Patrol and Civil Division. Administrator Jason Molino advised that, now that co-location with the City is no longer being considered, the County needs to follow a comprehensive approach in analyzing its public safety facility needs, with the conditions and program needs assessment as the first step. Based on the LaBella study findings, multiple alternatives should be considered, not just focusing on one building option, he said.

The administrator will come propose an enhanced scope of work for the LaBella study's to be discussed further by the Public Safety Committee next month. A tour of the 767 Warren building also will be scheduled.

Contact: David McKenna, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 607-564-7243; Richard John, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 607-256-9794

Legislators Seek Input on Expanding Rifle-Hunting Authorization in Tompkins County

The Legislature invited public comment on whether to seek State authorization to add Tompkins County to those counties in which rifle hunting is permitted for deer and bear. Hunter safety instructors are among those who have asked the Legislature to reconsider the issue. In 2013, a similar proposal had been advanced, but failed to be approved by the Legislature. At the hearing, only two people spoke, both speaking against. Lisa Dugan said she is vehemently opposed. "The last thing we need to do is to invite more shooting of any kind," she said. Caroline Town Council member Irene Weiser said, "All of our board members thought it was not a good idea," expressing safety concerns.

Public Safety Committee Chair Rich John said the hearing's purpose was to let people talk on the issue, and to make sure entire Legislature had an opportunity to hear about it. He anticipates his committee will take up the issue next month.

Contact: Richard John, Chair, Public Safety Committee, 607-256-9794

Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant Awarded to Examine Issue of Tourism Improvement District

The Legislature, by a vote of 13-1 (Legislator Dan Klein opposed), awarded the Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau a nearly \$34,000 2019 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant (funded through County Room Occupancy Tax funds) for professional services to examine the issue of formation of a Tompkins County "Tourism Improvement District" as a potential way to support costs for a future conference center. Funding exists within the 2019 Tourism Program budget. Legislator Klein said he was uncomfortable moving the matter forward without further discussion, and that he wants tourism money to support direct programs.

Contact: Anna Kelles, Chair, Housing and Economic Development Committee, 607-342-2036

Among other business,

Legislature Chair Martha Robertson proclaimed August 26, 2019 as Women's Equality Day in Tompkins County, commemorating the day August 26, 1920 on which, through passage of the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution with ratification of two-thirds of the states, the women of America earned their right to vote. "In the names of those who have fought for equality for all, we celebrate Women's Equality Day across the country, marking the approval of the nineteenth Amendment," the proclamation states, noting that achievement of full women's suffrage came 72 years after the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls in 1848. The right to vote was just one of the many basic civil rights denied to women for decades, and women still face inequitable treatment in the United States today, the proclamation notes.

The Legislature approved transfer of nearly \$250,000 from Airport Fund Balance to the Airport operating budget and awarded a consulting contract to Ricondo & Associates, Inc., of Chicago, IL, to provide financial planning services, including a business plan, for Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. The contract will also cover such elements as review of all airport contracts, creation of new airline agreements, rental car customer facility charges, rules and regulations, data collection, and growth strategy.

County Finance Director Rick Snyder reported on July sales tax receipts, report that the non-reconciled figures show a 5.61% increase in the County share compared to a year ago, with year-to-date receipts up by 4.75%.

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