



Inclusion Through Diversity

Dominick Recckio, Communications Director  
drecckio@tompkins-co.org  
315-730-1189, Cell  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Highlights of the **May 5th, 2020** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

#### **Resolution Passed Authorizing County Administrator to Carry Out Furloughs of 96 County Employees in Response to COVID-19 Budget Impacts**

The Tompkins County Legislature unanimously passed a resolution directing County Administrator Jason Molino to carry out planned furloughs of County employees, effective at the end of the workday on Saturday May 9, 2020, and lasting through July 31, 2020. The resolution, moved by Legislator Martha Robertson (D Dryden) and seconded by Legislator Anna Kelles (D-Ithaca), passed with a vote of 14-0.

The resolution came following a 2020 mid-year budget review shared by County Administrator Jason Molino. Molino's budget review included planning in response to decreased revenue projections, and highlighted challenges and uncertainties due to COVID-19. Revenue shortfalls are projected to be between \$11 million and \$18 million in 2020. Planned expense reductions include holding position vacancies open, capital program reductions, reductions in agency contracts, and temporary furloughs of County employees.

Ninety-six (96) Tompkins County employees are planned to be furloughed, including 12 and 6 week full and part time furloughs. Molino shared that a careful process was followed, considering employees already on leave, the nature of work, and potential financial impact on each employee. In addition to enhanced unemployment benefits available, County employees affected by furloughs will still retain access to their health insurance benefits, with the County continuing to pay the employer share. Employees will also have the opportunity to cash out a portion of their accrued time. The Tompkins County Workforce NY Career Center will be holding webinars for to answer questions and provide resources for furloughed employees. Legislator Shawna Black (D-Ithaca) thanked the County staff, stating "I know that each decision made took a lot of time. I want to convey to our staff that we also take this very seriously and that we realize that these furloughs affect you and your families." She added "We are going to have some very difficult times ahead of us with some very difficult decisions, but we are certainly concerned about this and are thinking of you and your families."

*Contact, Martha Robertson, Chair Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee 607-592-3119, Jason Molino 607-274-5551*

#### **Legislature Receives Update on County COVID-19 Operations, Including Positive Case Demographics**

County Administrator Jason Molino shared a timeline document updating the Legislature on Tompkins County's COVID-19 emergency response. The presentation laid out operations updates and shared information on the Governor's guidelines for regional reopening. Public Health Director Frank Kruppa

shared a composite of demographic information of the 133 positive COVID-19 cases in Tompkins County to date. Data was shared on age range, race, and source of exposure to COVID-19. Kruppa shared that the efforts Tompkins County has taken as a community have been valuable and helped to keep people healthy and to stop the spread of COVID-19.

The updated timeline document with demographic data and other updates can be found online [here](#).  
*Contact Jason Molino 607-274-5551, Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director and Commissioner of Mental Health, 607-274-6674*

### **Among other business:**

As part of ongoing commitments to transportation infrastructure in Tompkins County, the Legislature passed a series of resolutions regarding capital improvements for the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. Included in the resolutions were the issuance of up to \$3 million in bonds for the project, as well as the relocation of the existing fuel farm to the airport. The resolutions passed with a vote of 11-3, with Legislators Shawna Black, Amanda Champion, and Henry Granison opposed.

No public comments were shared during the public hearing regarding the airport resolutions.  
*Contact, Michael Lane, Chair, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee, 607-844-8440*

Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) shared thanks for County staff, stating, “COVID-19 hit and our staff continued to let this county function as smoothly as if nothing happened.” McBean-Clairborne continued by thanking the County administration and front line staff for “answering calls and emails as more and more people are having different needs each day” and for “Adjusting ably to the changing conditions and changing times and trying not to skip a beat on getting services to folks.”

**- END -**