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*Inclusion Through
Diversity*

"Promoting excellence in County operations while respecting the needs of the people we serve."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **September 1st, 2020** meeting of the
Tompkins County Legislature

Tompkins County Legislature Hears Update on County COVID-19 Response, Increase in Positive Cases Associated with Recent Cluster

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa and County Administrator Jason Molino shared updates on the County's ongoing COVID-19 response. Included in the update were details on community-wide testing offered by Tompkins County at no cost in partnership with Cayuga Health System. The expanded access to testing was [announced](#) following a previous approval by the Legislature to utilize contingent funds and seek FEMA reimbursement. Tompkins County residents can get tested for COVID-19 at no cost at the Cayuga Health Sampling Site as of September 1.

Kruppa shared that a recent cluster of COVID-19 cases among Cornell students has grown to 21 positives. Contact investigations are ongoing and the Tompkins County Health Department is collaborating with Cornell Health to complete the investigations. All identified positive cases are in isolation and as close contacts are identified they are being placed in mandatory quarantine. "It wasn't a single gathering that led to this — it was a series of smaller gatherings without masks and social distancing... All of the new cases identified since Saturday have been amongst individuals in quarantine as close contacts; these new cases have not created additional exposures. Cornell is working with students, providing housing for isolation and quarantine, and continues to be a great partner," stated Kruppa.

Kruppa and Molino also reported on Cornell's recently launched COVID-19 dashboard, and on personal protective equipment that has been distributed by the Emergency Operations Center since the start of the pandemic. Over 78,000 masks have been distributed to municipalities, school districts, and businesses, with the share for businesses supporting nearly 14,000 local workers.

The full timeline document can be found [here](#). *Contacts: Jason Molino, Tompkins County Administrator, 607-274-5551; Frank Kruppa, Tompkins County Public Health Director, 607-274-6674*

Resolution Passed Urging New York State to Include Counties in Planning Efforts Related to Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

The resolution moved by Legislator Deborah Dawson (D - Lansing) and seconded by Legislator Martha Robertson (D-Dryden) passed unanimously, 13-0 (Legislator Shawna Black was excused). The resolution asks that the state establish a formal and active role for counties in planning efforts related to the act, and to engage local governments throughout development and implementation of the Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan. The resolution cited that currently the Climate Action Council and its Advisory Panels and Working Groups have no members directly representing any of the 62 counties in New York State. *Contact: Deborah Dawson, Chair, Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee, 607-351-8689*

Among Other Business

Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) invited Dr. Kenneth Clarke, Director of the Tompkins County Office of Human Rights, and Legislator Anne Koreman (D-Ulysses) to read a special proclamation honoring the life and legacy of Kirby Edmonds. Edmonds was cited as being a tireless worker for civil and human rights, conflict resolution, diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice in Ithaca, Tompkins County, and beyond. In 2019, Edmonds assumed the leadership role as Vice Chairperson of the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission, an advisory board of the Tompkins County Legislature, and he played a central role in reestablishing the Commission as an important advocate for social justice. The Legislature held a moment of silence in memory of

Edmonds. Legislators offered remembrances, including Legislator Koreman stating, “Kirby was about bringing people together — he was about listening to each other and empowering people of all ages.” Chairwoman McBean-Clairborne shared, “Kirby was a good soul. I don’t think there has ever been a problem that Kirby didn’t think there could be a solution to. He did tremendous work in the community, and he did a lot of it behind the scenes. He wasn’t the person looking for praise.”

The Legislature adopted the 2020-2021 budget for Tompkins Cortland Community College with a vote of 10-0-2. (Legislator Shawna Black was excused and Legislators Mike Sigler (R-Lansing) and Henry Granison (D-Ithaca) abstained, citing their professional roles associated with the college.) Tompkins County’s sponsorship share is slated to decrease by 1.6% this year due to an increase in Cortland County’s local enrollment. It was also reported that the college’s budget was passed recently in Cortland County.

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