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*Inclusion Through
Diversity*

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Jason Molino

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS
Lisa Holmes and Amie Hendrix

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **September 15th, 2020** meeting of the
Tompkins County Legislature

Proclamation from the Tompkins Legislature Recognizes LatinX Heritage Month

A proclamation submitted by Legislator Henry Granison (D-Ithaca) was read acknowledging LatinX Heritage Month. Members of the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County joined the Legislature to receive the acknowledgement. Patricia Fernandez de Castro, president of the association, stated, “It’s immensely satisfying for us to be recognized in this manner, and for Tompkins County to be a welcoming place for all of us.” Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne thanked all members of the association and the LatinX community for their contributions to Tompkins County.

Among Other Business

Cornell University administrators visited the Legislature to share updates on their Ithaca campus reactivation. Administrators spoke to how the first two weeks of classes have gone, the incidence of positive cases to date, and answered questions from legislators. Joel Malina, VP for University Relations shared, “We would not be in the position we are in if not for the remarkable partnership with Frank Kruppa and the Tompkins County Health Department … This is a complicated endeavor, and it has been critical and rewarding to work closely with the County. Thank you from all of Cornell.” When asked about impacts on international students or students from other states who might have to quarantine, administrators reported that enrollment held at around 98%, with most international students successfully engaging with courses online. Legislator Rich John (D-Ithaca), who also teaches a class at the university, remarked on the professionalism of the testing experience and the care taken to ensure a safe classroom experience.

The County’s new Chief Equity and Diversity Officer, Deanna Carrithers, was introduced to legislators. Chairwoman McBean-Clairborne enthusiastically introduced Carrithers and acknowledged how intently Tompkins County employees have been committed to this work. McBean-Clairborne stated, “Dealing with diversity, equity, and inclusion is important to us in Tompkins County. We must continue to take bold steps, and we’ve been working on this for a number of years.” She added that she hopes Tompkins County becomes the model for this work. Carrithers thanked the Legislature for believing in diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, stating “You are meeting the moment … this work is about all of us. Thank you for your grace, kindness, and boldness in this work.” Legislator Anne Koreman (D-Ulysses), who chairs the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee, added, “We’re moving the needle in the right direction, and the Legislature looks forward to working with Deanna.”

The Legislature received an update on the County’s COVID-19 response from Frank Kruppa, Public Health Director for Tompkins County. Kruppa reported details on two clusters that the Health Department has been tracking as well as shared demographics on the positive COVID-19 cases identified to date. He further clarified that the increase in cases in the 10-19 age group has been driven by students new to higher education and do not reflect an increase in cases among children. Data on the number of individuals exposed to a known positive case was also reported. Kruppa shared, “We have not seen community cases related to the clusters — most exposures are between individuals who know and have interacted closely with one another.”

A comprehensive document outlining the Tompkins County’s COVID-19 response can be found [here](#). Contacts: Jason Molino, Tompkins County Administrator, 607-274-5551; Frank Kruppa, Tompkins County Public Health Director, 607-274-6674

On Monday night the Budget, Capital, and Personnel Committee held an expanded meeting to receive the recommended 2021 budget from County Administrator Jason Molino and presentations on departmental budgets from County Administration, Finance, and Human Resources. Molino’s budget presentation focused on the impacts of COVID-19 throughout 2020 and anticipated impacts for 2021. The recommended budget includes eliminating 47 positions at the County, including 18 currently filled by employees – those 18 employees would be offered another

open position at the County, reflecting a commitment to no layoffs due to COVID-19. The recommended County budget and a calendar of department and agency budget presentations can be found on the County Administration [website](#). *Contacts: Jason Molino, Tompkins County Administrator, 607-274-5551; Martha Robertson, Chair, Budget, Capital and Personnel Committee, 607-592-3119*

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