



Tompkins County Administration
125 East Court Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
Phone: (607) 274-5551
Fax: (607) 274-5558
www.tompkinscountyny.gov

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Jason Molino

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS
Lisa Holmes and Amie Hendrix

*Inclusion Through
Diversity*

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Legislature Receives COVID-19 Update from Emergency Operations Center

Tompkins County Administrator Jason Molino and Public Health Director Frank Kruppa presented the 16th bi-weekly COVID-19 update to the Tompkins County Legislature. The update came as the County surpassed 1,000 total positive resident cases since the beginning of the pandemic and as total active cases number reached 193, the highest active number to-date. Kruppa detailed the County's vaccination distribution planning, including his opinion that it is promising how much vaccine the U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimates will be available for rollout. The Health Department, in partnership with Cayuga Health Systems and long-term care facilities, is discussing how to distribute vaccine to priority populations such as healthcare and long-term care workers.

Molino detailed New York State's 'microcluster' zone metrics, sharing that while it would require a 3.5% infection rate to enter a yellow precautionary zone, the County estimates the local infection rate at ~0.64%.

Kruppa informed the Legislature about the Health Department's contact tracing capacity. Kruppa shared that 47 County staff from other departments have completed the Johns Hopkins contact tracing training and are assisting the Health Department nurses and staff leading the operation. He outlined the reasoning that the Health Department uses nursing staff to speak with positive individuals, including that it's important that there be a medical professional on the other end of the line to answer health related questions and assess close contacts, stating "We believe it's best practice and puts us in a position to provide high quality care to someone who has tested positive with an infectious disease". Kruppa praised the work of the Health Department nursing staff and thanked them for their dedication to stopping the spread of the disease in the community.

When opening the meeting, Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne stated, "I am appealing to folks to please be mindful, careful, and do your part to protect my health and I'll do my part to protect yours. And to the folks in our community who have experienced loss and those who are struggling from contracting this virus, I speak on behalf of this entire Legislature when I say we're thinking about you and sending you positive energy for comfort."

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*

Among Other Business

The Legislature unanimously approved a financing plan that will increase the annual household recycling fee to \$70 for 2021 (14-0). Recycling and Materials Management Department Director Barb Eckstrom presented details on the reasons for the increase in the annual fee and the five-year contract with Casella Waste Systems and shared that the department will be instituting a public education campaign to inform the public. Eckstrom stated, "It's important to note, as Legislators have mentioned in the past, we are continuing to recycle in this County, we offer a lot more than any other County or planning unit in the State. To put it in perspective, even with these increases we can move forward economically." *Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, 607-844-8440*