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**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
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**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 **January 19th, 2020** meeting of the  
 Tompkins County Legislature

**McBean-Clairborne Shares *State of the County*, Announces 2021 Committee and Liaison Appointments**

Legislature Chairwoman McBean-Clairborne shared a “State of the County” address, promising to “continue to lead from a place of confidence in each of our abilities, individually and collectively.” She continued, “with a solid foundation we can build our way back to strong ... as is reflected in our vaccination administration plan, which has been celebrated by Governor Cuomo and New York State.” County priorities outlined by McBean-Clairborne included the new Tompkins County International Airport, a push for more quality affordable housing, reimagining law enforcement, sustainability planning, our Community College, strengthening public transportation, economic recovery, and taking care of the Tompkins County workforce. “It is imperative that we do our best to ensure the best working climate to keep our employees engaged.”

McBean-Clairborne announced the following committee leadership assignments:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Vice Chairperson</b>
Budget, Capital, and Personnel	Deborah Dawson	Martha Robertson
Facilities and Infrastructure	Mike Lane	David McKenna
Government Operations	Amanda Champion	Dan Klein
Health & Human Services	Shawna Black	Henry Granison
Housing and Economic Development	Martha Robertson	Mike Sigler
Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality	Anne Koreman	Deborah Dawson
Public Safety	Rich John	Glenn Morey
Downtown Facilities	David McKenna	Rich John
Tompkins Intergovernmental Relations Committee	Martha Robertson	Mike Sigler
Workforce Diversity and Inclusion	Henry Granison	Anne Koreman

**Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Provides Legislature Update on COVID-19 Response**

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa and County Administrator Jason Molino updated the Legislature on the local COVID-19 pandemic response and vaccination rollout. Molino shared that reimbursements from FEMA have started to come in, detailing that other payments are pending and that County officials are watching plans at the Federal level for future stimulus bills and policies related to FEMA reimbursements.

Kruppa detailed the local COVID-19 vaccine rollout, “We got the amount of vaccine that we did because we could demonstrate being able to get it out quickly. It is unfortunate we didn’t get vaccine this week – the State has begun standing up their large-scale sites and have given more vaccine to those sites. We do expect to get vaccine next week and are ready to accept those doses.” Kruppa continued, “the reason for one large scale site is the efficiency that it creates for us, the only way to distribute so quickly and get the amount we have received is these efficiencies. When more vaccine supply is available, we’re looking forward to initiating our POD plans to ensure everyone in Tompkins County has access. The limited supply dictates that operate as efficiently as possible.” Both Kruppa and Molino continued to clarify that the main issue for distribution is the supply of the vaccine, which is severely limited and unpredictable.

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

Legislators participated in a national moment of unity and remembrance honoring lives lost to COVID-19. Chairwoman of the Tompkins County Legislature, Leslyn McBean-Clairborne stated, “We grieve for those who we have lost during this pandemic, every single loss is tragic, and we must continue to do all we can to protect one another. Sadly, we have lost 19 of our neighbors here in Tompkins County. This moment of unity is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and look forward to a brighter future as we get through this pandemic.”

The Legislature named Dr. Christine Kitano as the Tompkins County Poet Laureate. “There were wonderful, amazing applicants for this year’s laureate. We really have a talented community,” stated Legislator Amanda Champion (D-Ithaca) who assisted with the search process. Kitano read a poem titled “Ithaca Domestic” to the Legislature to celebrate her being named to the post. Listen to Dr. Kitano read the poem [here](#) and read more about her appointment [here](#). *Contact Amanda Champion, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 607-351-2828*

Legislator Martha Robertson (D-Ithaca) announced her retirement from the Legislature following the completion of this term. She reflected on her time in the Legislature over the past two decades, stating, “In two decades, you cast a lot of votes. One that stands out was our decision not to build a new jail for 135 human beings, 100 more than we are housing tonight. From 2008 through 2014 we fought back on fracking, with speeches, hearings, and rallies all over the state. Housing has always been an issue of equity and justice – leading, for example, to the Community Housing Development Fund and the Housing Summit in 2016. We got the Public Service Commission to approve the NYSEG Non-Pipe Alternative, the first such gas-reduction initiative in the state. On the IDA, we developed progressive housing and energy policies and made grants to childcare providers to help them stay afloat through COVID. We got New York State to help us expand the airport, move the DOT from the waterfront, and pay for the third County court.” She continued, “I’m making this public statement to help get the word out; anyone interested in serving our community can call me so I can tell them what a great gig this is! It’s been an absolute honor to serve the people of Dryden and Tompkins County, and a true pleasure to work with everyone in Tompkins County government.”

A resolution was passed (8-5, Legislators Granison, Klein, Lane, Black, McBean-Clairborne dissenting) to amend the hotel room tax for all lodging establishments in Tompkins County. The room tax rate for lodging with 10 or fewer rooms had been set at 3%, while the rate for all larger properties was 5%. The newly amended hotel room occupancy tax law sets the rate at 5% for all lodging establishments in Tompkins County. *Contact Mike Sigler, Vice Chair, Housing and Economic Development Committee, 607-339-7978*

Continuation of free COVID-19 testing for the community was approved unanimously (13-0). The County will continue to cover the cost of non-medically necessary testing for Tompkins County residents and seek FEMA reimbursement on those costs. *Contact Shawna Black, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee, 607-351-7855*