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**INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
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**DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
Amie Hendrix

*Inclusion Through  
Diversity*

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

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Photos for media use: <https://lightroom.adobe.com/gallery/1deb3bfb23204eabae30b726df14041a>

Highlights of the **August 17, 2021** meeting of the  
Tompkins County Legislature

### **Expansive COVID-19 Update Given by Public Health Director and County Staff**

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa and members of the Emergency Operations Center updated the Legislature on the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Tompkins County and ongoing elements of the County's pandemic response.

Deputy County Administrator Amie Hendrix outlined the increase in total positive cases over the past month. Hendrix also outlined the County's advisory for indoor mask-wearing for residents, a vaccination requirement for County employees, and a directive requiring masks for County employees and individuals in County buildings.

Kruppa shared data on the recent increase in cases, the Delta variant, and hospitalizations. Kruppa noted that the focus should continue to be on the severity of infections, noting that the vaccines are remarkably effective in keeping people healthy, even while the number of vaccinated individuals becoming positive has recently increased. Kruppa detailed that of the recent uptick in hospitalizations, a vast majority have been of unvaccinated individuals. Of the few vaccinated individuals who have been hospitalized, the trend holds that they have been admitted for a non-COVID related issue and tested positive upon admittance. The hospital continues to report capacity and the ability to flex as needed if more COVID-19 cases become hospitalized.

Legislator Mike Lane (D-Dryden) inquired about the recently announced third (or "booster") shot information from the CDC. Kruppa recommended that all individuals who are immunocompromised communicate directly with their primary care provider regarding the third vaccine shot, and that many of those healthcare providers can provide the vaccine or direct individuals to local pharmacies. More information will be shared by the Tompkins County Health Department in the coming week. Kruppa also noted that in the event that third shots become recommended for the wider population, additional large clinics will be planned and operated.

Additionally, Cornell University administrators joined earlier in the meeting to detail plans for the fall semester. Cornell is currently following Tompkins County's mask advisory, mandating indoor masking for all campus community members regardless of vaccination status. Updates were shared on vaccination progress and testing, with vaccination rates being very high amongst faculty, staff, and students, and a robust testing program including arrival and surveillance testing. Some vaccinated student populations, including all undergraduates and various professional student groups will be included in a surveillance testing program to begin the

semester. In addition, anyone at Cornell can opt-in to testing at any point. VP of University Relations, Joel Malina thanked Tompkins County for its continued partnership throughout the pandemic.

### **Legislature Approves Purchase of Two Downtown Properties Adjacent to County Buildings**

The Legislature approved a resolution to purchase properties at 300 & 308 North Tioga St. following successful negotiations with the property owners. The resolution to acquire the properties passed 12-2 with Legislators Champion (D-Ithaca) and McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) opposed.

Several Legislators stressed that no plans for building demolition or construction have been made at this point, and that the public will be kept in the loop on plans as they develop.

### **Among Other Business**

A resolution adopting a youth deer hunting pilot program passed 9-5 with Legislators Granison (D-Ithaca), Koreman (D-Ulysses), Robertson (D-Dryden), Black (D-Ithaca), and Champion (D-Ithaca) in opposition. Following a state law establishing the pilot program for Counties that opt-in, a local decision had to be made by September 1, 2021.

A proclamation was read by Legislator Martha Robertson (D-Dryden) recognizing Sue Dale-Hall for her work in the area of childcare and as the director of the Child Development Council. August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 was declared “Sue Dale-Hall Day.” Sue’s accomplishments as an advocate, leader, and supporter of childcare opportunities and programs of all sizes were celebrated. Legislators joined in the praise thanking her for her incredible and lasting impact on the community.

A proclamation was read by Legislator Mike Sigler (R-Lansing) acknowledging Elizabeth Cree’s retirement from the position of Republican Election Commissioner in Tompkins County. Elizabeth has been instrumental in the County elections system over the past several decades and was celebrated for her various accomplishments related to voting and fair elections in Tompkins County and across New York State.

A proclamation was read celebrating local Olympic bronze medalist Kyle Dake, of Lansing N.Y. Kyle’s myriad local, national, and global accomplishments were highlighted by Legislator Deborah Dawson (D-Lansing). Wednesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 will hereby be known as “Kyle Dake Day” in Tompkins County.

Tompkins County continues to seek applicants for nine volunteer independent redistricting commissioner seats. For more information on the volunteer roles and an information session for interested individuals, visit <https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/news/tompkins-county-seeks-applicants-local-redistricting-commission>.

Due to the length of the agenda and presentations for this meeting, a thorough update on the Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative was delayed until early September. Interim County Administrator Lisa Holmes did share that several over-target-requests related to reimagining initiatives will be presented during the County budget process.