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*Inclusion Through
Diversity*

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Highlights of the **September 7, 2021** meeting of the
Tompkins County Legislature

Legislature Hears COVID-19 Response Update Following Recent Record Case Increase

A detailed report on the Tompkins County COVID-19 pandemic response was given to the Legislature by Public Health Director Frank Kruppa and Emergency Operations Center Chief Amie Hendrix. The theme of this presentation was that the number of positive COVID-19 cases has risen significantly, though the number of hospitalizations remain low. TCHD has continued to monitor and communicate with the community on the severity of disease resulting from COVID-19.

Kruppa outlined data related to the recent increase in cases, sharing "...the good news is our cases have peaked and are starting to come down. What we saw in those numbers was that it was predominantly related to higher education and finding positives through Cornell's testing protocols (arrival and surveillance testing)." Kruppa continued, "While we've been looking at case numbers throughout the pandemic and continue to monitor them, we are focusing on the severity of illness and what's happening at our hospitals. Even as our cases have increased our hospitalizations have stayed at single digits." Kruppa outlined the anticipated transition from this being a 'pandemic' to 'endemic,' which involves acknowledging that there will be spread as activity resumes, there are tools to keep people healthy including vaccines and masks, and that a key activity moving forward will be continuing to take care of the most vulnerable in the community who are unvaccinated (including children) and immunocompromised individuals. Kruppa answered questions from Legislators and added his ongoing thoughts on the negative impacts from the pandemic shutdowns on the mental, physical, and emotional health of many individuals in the community.

Among other Business

Tompkins County Chief Equity and Diversity Officer, Deanna Carrithers presented an update on the Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative. The update included details on the Collaborative's work to-date, the development of the Community Justice Center, and the impending launch of the www.publicsafetyreimagined.org website and community engagement tool. The search for the Project Director and Data Analyst for the Community Justice Center are open through September 24th. Carrithers kicked off the update reminding Legislators and community members of the charge to center communities of color in the Reimagining work.

Interim Tompkins County Administrator Lisa Holmes shared an update on the to-be-presented 2022 Tompkins County budget. The budget will be presented at next week's Expanded Budget Committee meeting of the whole Legislature, on Tuesday September 14th at 5:30pm. Holmes

added that Administration received 125 over target requests from departments and agencies, totaling \$7.825 million (up from \$3.6m in 2021 and \$3.1m in 2020).

A proclamation was read by Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) celebrating Latinx Heritage Month. Several members of the Tompkins County Latino Civic Association were present to receive the proclamation. Association President Patricia Fernandez de Castro spoke following the acceptance of the proclamation, stating, “Thank you not only for the celebratory aspect of the month, and your support and interest of the monthlong festivities that we (LCA) hold, but also to the County for support over this past year, including access to (COVID-19) tests regardless of migratory condition and your interest in making public information accessible to all major language groups in the County.” Legislator Mike Lane (D-Dryden) thanked Fernandez de Castro for her efforts, especially helping during the 2020 Census count.

A proclamation was read by Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) acknowledging Suicide Prevention Week in Tompkins County. The proclamation was accepted by Beth Harrington on behalf of the Suicide Prevention Coalition. The proclamation stated that suicide is preventable and that tragically, there are around 47,000 suicide deaths in the United States each year. If you need help, you can reach the crisis line at 1-800-273-8255 at any time.

A resolution opposing a public auction of land along Cayuga Lake by NYSEG was passed unanimously, 13-0. The resolution states that the Tompkins County Legislature requests that NYSEG take action to cancel the proposed auction of the Property and instead immediately enter into negotiations with the Finger Lakes Land Trust to bring about a sale for conservation that would provide NYSEG with fair market value compensation for the property. Following the passage of the resolution, the Legislature will advocate to New York State officials on this topic.

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