

Highlights of the October 5, 2021 meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Resolution Supporting Broadband Internet Access Physical Study Passes

A resolution supporting a physical study of addresses in Tompkins County that lack broadband internet access passed 11-3 with Legislators Lane (D-Dryden), Champion (D-Ithaca), and Klein (D-Danby) in opposition. This physical study replaces the currently paused and previously supported “Fujitsu Study.”

Legislator Dan Klein (D-Danby) had proposed an amendment that would allocate funds for both the Countywide physical survey and completing the existing Fujitsu study, it was voted down 5-9 with Legislators McKenna (R-Newfield), Morey (R-Groton), Robertson (D-Dryden), Schill (D-Ithaca), Sigler (R-Lansing), Dawson (D-Lansing), Granison (D-Ithaca), John (D-Ithaca), and McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) in opposition.

Senior Planner for the County Nick Helmholdt was asked about what happens after the physical survey and suggested that following the survey local providers would be asked to provide maps and proposals for increased service to reach all homes, and a proposal would be developed once that information was gathered.

Legislator Deborah Dawson (D-Lansing) argued in support of the resolution that the Legislature’s goals are to institute the best, most efficient, and most cost-effective way to get the work of increasing broadband access done.

Among Other Business

A moment of silence was observed in honor of former Legislator Pat Pryor. Legislators remarked about Pat’s service to the community and impact as a Legislator.

Several Cornell students spoke during public comment in support of a proposed over-target request for the 2022 Tompkins County Budget that would add supportive and affordable housing for individuals reentering the community following incarceration. Legislator Rich John (D-Ithaca) thanked the individuals for speaking and asked that the report mentioned during their comments be sent to the Legislature.

Tompkins County Chief Equity and Diversity Officer Deanna Carrithers shared an update on the Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative. The update included details on the Community Justice Center development, the www.publicsafetyreimagined.org website and community engagement tool, and budget requests moving through the 2022 budget process.

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa and Deputy County Administrator Amie Hendrix presented the bi-weekly COVID-19 pandemic response update. The update detailed recent activities by the County and Health Department responding to the pandemic and updates on vaccine booster shot clinics and guidance. Kruppa extended a thank you to staff who are still working diligently and compassionately on the pandemic response, stating “At the health department the COVID response is a seven day a week activity and our staff is still doing contact tracing – and they are the linchpin of our

vaccination efforts. I wanted to thank all of them for that continued effort and to remind the community that there are people working every day to limit the spread and keep our community healthy.”