

Highlights of the February 1, 2022 meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Legislators Continue Discussion on Community Recovery Fund, Determination of Source of Fund to Pay Consultant Fee

Chairwoman Shawna Black shared that this discussion on what funds to use for the to-be-determined consultant tasked with administering the Community Recovery Fund grant program was moved to the full Legislature because not all legislators were present during the recent Expanded Budget Committee discussion.

Legislator Rich John (D-Ithaca) moved that the amount needed (to be determined) for the consultant be structured to be subtracted from the County's fund balance separate from the \$6.53 million set aside for the Recovery Fund. The Budget Capital and Personnel committee will further consider the resolution at their next meeting. The motion passed 10-3 with Legislators Dan Klein (D-Danby), Mike Lane (D-Dryden), and Black opposed.

Among Other Business

A proclamation was read acknowledging attorney James Baker for his service as acting supervising attorney contributing to the Tompkins County Assigned Counsel program upon his retirement from practicing law. Legislator Rich John (D-Ithaca) remarked on the Assigned Counsel program as key to "our criminal justice system in Tompkins County." John added that Baker helped people in the community going through some of the worst times in their lives.

A proclamation was read celebrating Black History Month along with a recorded rendition of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* as performed by the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers. The proclamation acknowledged several influential Black members of the Ithaca community including Civil Rights Leader Dr. Dorothy Cotton, and Ruth Carol Taylor, the first Black flight attendant in the United States.

In her Chair's remarks, Legislature Chairwoman Shawna Black (D-Ithaca) stated, "We have a rich history of influential Black residents. Our History Center, housed in the Tompkins Center for History and Culture has a great set of resources on local Black history from the Underground Railroad to new curriculum from Southside community center. I would like to point everyone to the History Center's [Oral History Collection](#), where you can hear recent reflections on the Black experience in our community. When I see these resources, I feel proud of the work that the County does to support the History Center archiving and presenting this work."

Black continued, "While we might focus on and highlight the remarkable or influential, every Black history is important and our ongoing work as a County should honor and support the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our communities. I look forward to seeing and hearing about the programming that our community partners and departments participate in this month to honor Black History."

An update was given on the Reimagining Public Safety Collaborative by Chief Equity and Diversity Officer Deanna Carrithers and Community Justice Center Project Director Monalita Smiley. The update included details on welcoming Monalita into her new role leading implementation of collaborative Reimagining plans and her getting to know key stakeholders both internally at the County and City of Ithaca and externally in the community. Several plans are in progress, including a kickoff to the “Community Healing Plan” specifically designed to support the Black community in Ithaca and Tompkins County. Carrithers shared additional information on the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office Pilot Program plan to telephonically address certain non-dangerous calls – Sheriff’s Clerks are being recruited now for those non-sworn officer positions ([apply here](#)).

A COVID response update was shared by Deputy County Administrator Amie Hendrix and Public Health Director Frank Kruppa was shared. Kruppa stated, “We have roughly 41,000 residents who have been boosted. We will be reporting this more regularly over time” and spoke to the ongoing booster dose availability at local pharmacies and primary care offices.