



Administration

TOMPKINS COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Lisa Holmes

DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Amie Hendrix

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

Highlights of the **April 19, 2022** meeting of the
Tompkins County Legislature

Tompkins County Adopts Juneteenth as Paid Employee Holiday

With a unanimous vote of 14-0 the Tompkins County Legislature voted to adopt Juneteenth as a paid employee holiday. Juneteenth is an annual celebration of Black liberation from slavery in America at the end of the Civil War and falls on Sunday June 19, 2022 but will be observed by the County as a holiday for employees on Monday June 20, 2022.

Legislator Anne Koreman (D-Ulysses) stated, “I’m very proud to be able to vote for this tonight.” Koreman read from the resolution, “Juneteenth is a commemorative observance of the hardships and losses suffered by African Americans in their struggle to attain freedom from slavery, to recognize and pay tribute to the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in this quest.”

Dawson stated that “I want to thank [Legislator] Henry Granison and the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee for doing the work on this.”

Legislator Mike Lane (D-Dryden) stated that “In a lot of the industrialized world, employees get much more time off, personal time, and vacation time. Holidays are important to have for our employees, it gives them a break from the toils of their jobs... People need to have more time available for themselves and their families.”

Legislature Chairwoman Shawna Black (D-Ithaca) stated, “It’s important that we recognize our history. It’s about time – we’re likely one of the last employers to allow for this as a holiday. I’m glad to see us take this step forward.”

In 2021, Tompkins County celebrated Juneteenth with a series of events, including a virtual event titled “Juneteenth and Black Lives Matter: An Africana Studies Perspective” that is viewable on the Tompkins County [YouTube channel](#).

Legislature Awards Contract for Management of Community Recovery Grant Fund Program

The Legislature voted 14-0 to award the contract for administration of a local recovery grant funding to [MRB Group](#). The program is a \$6.53 million fund created to use a portion of the County’s available fund balance for community projects (read more about the development of the program [here](#)). The selection of MRB group follows an RFP process that [began](#) in late 2021.

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



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According to County Administrator Lisa Holmes, MRB Group “rose to the top in terms of being able to assist us and guide us most closely resembling what the Legislature is hoping to achieve through this process,” adding that they “will aid in making the program most equitable and expeditious.”

Legislator Deborah Dawson (D-Lansing) stated “ It’s gratifying to take this step toward getting the program up and running and the money out the door.”

To stay up to date on the program, subscribe to the available [email newsletter](#).

Among Other Business

County Legislators acknowledged the work of Jim Blizzard, who has been working in support of the County’s public information and streaming of public meetings for many years and is transitioning out of his role this year. Legislators spoke about how Jim has been instrumental in the streaming of audio and video from Legislature meetings and increasing public access. Legislator Mike Sigler (R-Lansing) stated, “...one of the big things we want to do is be transparent. We appreciate the fact that you’ve been able to go from one camera to multiple cameras, and as the job has grown you have grown and moved the ball forward for us. It is noticed.” Legislator Lee Shurtleff (R-Groton) stated, “You’ve kept us connected to our communities through the work you’ve done.” Blizzard thanked the Legislature for ensuring that the work is ongoing, as the County has now hired a full time Media Production Assistant position to manage the work going forward, he stated “I believe its important that our government representatives are visible, it is comforting to the people who feel so helpless in so many parts of the country to who don’t feel connected to their representatives.” Legislature meetings are visible on the County’s [YouTube channel](#) and on Spectrum’s channel 15.

Chairwoman Shawna Black (D-Ithaca) thanked the Highway Department for their work during the recent snowstorm. County Administrator Lisa Holmes echoed those thanks on behalf of the County and specifically the Slaterville Volunteer Fire Department who worked on tree removal in conjunction with the Highway Department staff.

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa provided a brief update on the COVID-19 pandemic response, including the following responses to frequently asked questions:

- Positive case numbers have been increasing in Tompkins County, though the CDC community levels calculation remains at ‘medium’ as hospitalizations remain low in Tompkins County.
- Treatment options such as antiviral pills are available for those who test positive, TCHD continues to ask residents who test positive to discuss their diagnosis and treatment options with their primary care physician.
- Regarding wastewater testing, this is occurring in Cayuga Heights and in the City of Ithaca but data is still being collected before results can be confirmed locally. Kruppa also detailed that this type of testing is not as vital in Tompkins County as locally there is a much more robust PCR and self-testing availability and uptake than in many areas of the State and country. Kruppa added that wastewater testing is meant as an early



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indicator that is not as necessary when the community has widespread PCR and self-testing availability.

Legislators heard an update on sales tax from Tompkins County Finance Director Rick Snyder. Snyder reported that Q1 months have produced the highest amounts received for those months to-date. The report detailed receipts and that the 2022 year-to-date figure is nearly \$1.8 million higher than 2021 year-to-date and 2.3% over the 2022 budgeted amount.

Legislator Dan Klein (D-Danby) who chairs the Health and Human Services Committee alerted the Legislature to an upcoming presentation by the Child Development Council on the state of childcare in Tompkins County and the status of several projects in the County that have received partial funding. The presentation will be at the next regular committee meeting on May 16 at 3:00pm and can be viewed on the County's [YouTube channel](#).

Legislator Mike Lane (D-Dryden) who chairs the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee shared that conversations are ongoing regarding the downtown campus of County buildings and departments, and around the decisions that must be made in order to move forward. A recent special meeting was held on the topic, though no others are scheduled at this time. A study on the space needs of County departments will occur in the 2022 calendar year.