



Inclusion Through Diversity

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THREE PAGES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **February 19, 2019** meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature

Kate Shanks-Booth Named Director of Youth Services

The Tompkins County Legislature, by unanimous vote, confirmed County Administrator Jason Molino's appointment of Kate Shanks-Booth as the County's Director of Youth Services. (Legislators Leslyn McBean-Clairborne and Amanda Champion were excused.) Ms. Shanks-Booth brings to the position more than 15 years of experience in not-for-profit leadership, more than a decade of that working with youth. For the past two-and-a-half years, Shanks-Booth has led the Women's Opportunity Center as Executive Director, leading the community non-profit with offices in both Ithaca and Syracuse. She previously served for six years as Assistant Director of the Cayuga Heights School Age Program; and before that as the Director of Research and Planning for Community Action Partnership, and as Director of Childcare Services for the St. Joseph School District, both in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The new Director of Youth Services holds a Master's of Business Administration degree and an Advanced Certificate in Nonprofit Management from the State University of New York Empire State College, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Missouri Western State University, St. Joseph, Missouri.

County Administrator Jason Molino told Legislators that the new Director was selected from a field of more than 25 applicants for the position.

"It is indeed an honor to serve in Tompkins County as the Director of Youth Services," Director Shanks-Booth said. "I am thrilled to be joining a fantastic team, that doing amazing things in our local communities."

Kate Shanks-Booth will begin service as Director of Youth Services March 11.
Contact: County Administrator Jason Molino, 607-274-5551.

Legislature Approves Charter Change Regarding County Veterans Services Agency

Following a public hearing, the Legislature, without dissent, (Legislators McBean-Clairborne and Champion excused) approved a new Local Law that modifies the County Charter to pave the way for establishment of a Tompkins County Veterans Services Agency. The charter change designates the County Administrator (rather than the County Legislature) as appointing authority for the Director of Veterans Services, as is required under New York State Executive Law. Now that the charter change has been approved, Tompkins County will immediately begin the search for candidates to fill the new Director of Veterans Services position and establish the Veterans Services Agency.

Contact: Michael Lane, Chair, Government Operations Committee, 844-8440.

Legislature Opposes President Trump's Declaration of a National Emergency

The Tompkins County Legislature passed a resolution condemning President Trump's declaration of a natural emergency and urging passage of a joint resolution to revoke it. The vote came along party lines, 9-3, with Republicans Mike Sigler, Glenn Morey, and Dave McKenna voting no. (Legislators Leslyn McBean-Clairborne and Amanda Champion were excused.) The resolution, advanced by Legislator Deborah Dawson, through a multitude of factual and technical points, contests the President's declaration of a "state of emergency" pursuant

to section 201 of the National Emergencies Act, for the stated purpose of addressing a “border security and humanitarian crisis that threatens core national security interests.”

The resolution, in part, maintains that the President’s televised statement demonstrates that “he declared a national emergency in order to build his wall quickly, using funds that Congress would not appropriate for the purpose of immediate wall construction,” and that “at the very least, the President’s willingness to use this power to declare a national emergency in order to bypass Congress’s Constitutional power to appropriate funds poses a grave threat to the separation of powers created by the United States Constitution.”

Legislator Dawson said she does not see the resolution as taking a political position on immigration, but that any such declaration must be factually supported, which she said this is not.

“How can it not be a political resolution?” asked Legislator Sigler. “I’m not saying that everybody crossing the southern border is looking to do the U.S. harm...(but) it’s a small percent of a big number.” Those entering the country should come through some port of entry and be recorded...and support the nation, he said. “We are setting these folks up who enter the country illegally and turning them into indentured servants” through threat of deportation. Sigler said his constituents elected him to address local issues to make this community a better place to live, and that is what he intends to do.

The resolution “condemns the Proclamation declaring a state of emergency requiring the use of armed forces to build a wall on our southern border as an overreach and abuse of executive power,” and urges. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and Congressman Tom Reed to support a joint resolution of termination to end the President’s declaration of emergency status.

Contact: Legislator Deborah Dawson, 607-351-8689; Legislator Mike Sigler, 607-339-7978

Legislature Opposes NYS Executive State Budget Fund Reductions to Localities

Acting on a resolution brought forth by Legislator Michael Lane, the Legislature by unanimous vote (Legislators McBean-Clairborne and Champion excused) went on record in opposition to the proposed and amended 2020 Executive State budget, impacting Aid and Incentives to Municipalities, and County sales tax revenues.

The proposed Executive Budget significantly reduces the State revenue sharing program known as Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM), eliminating AIM funding for all towns and villages in Tompkins County—a total local reduction of nearly \$400,000. An amendment to the Executive Budget on February 15 calls for making impacted towns and villages whole from changes to AIM funding by utilizing revenue from county online sales tax, should that online tax be adopted as part of the State budget.

“Instead of restoring AIM funding and signifying a desire by the State to act as partners with local governments, this budget amendment would require counties to make up for lost AIM funding with sales tax revenue, imposing a new mandate on counties,” the resolution states. Requiring counties to make up for the State’s cut in AIM funding to villages and towns “sets a horrible precedent,” unnecessarily shifting the State’s burden to local taxpayers.

“We don’t need to fund another state mandate from county coffers,” Mr. Lane said.

The Legislature urges New York State to restore full funding for AIM from traditional State revenues.

Contact: Legislator Michael Lane, 607-844-8440.

Sale of CDBG Loan Portfolio Approved; Program Income Committed to Airport Accessibility Improvements

Responding to a policy change by New York State regarding NYS Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Income Funds and a challenging March 31st deadline, the Legislature, by unanimous vote , (Legislators McBean-Clairborne and Champion excused), authorized sale of the County’s NYS CDBG loan portfolio to Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services for \$386,000. The resolution commits County use of the sale proceeds to construction of ADA-related improvements as part of the ITH Airport Terminal Improvement project that will accessibility of the facility to persons with disabilities. Program income from the loan portfolio

sale is expected to help cover approximately half of the currently planned ADA-related improvements that are part of the Airport capital improvement project.

Last year, New York State made significant changes to its CDBG Program Income policies, so that as of March 31, 2019 communities will no longer be able to use program income funds and will be required to return all program income to the State. Selling the Loan Portfolio and committing sale proceeds to a State-approved CDBG-eligible activity was the only viable path identified to retain local use of funds while conforming to State requirements. Housing and Economic Development Committee Chair Anna Kelles noted that Tompkins County is the only county in the state that has been able to recapture the money that would have been lost by the New York State mandate. Because of strict State guidelines and the very tight timeline, no housing-related projects were found that would qualify. INHS Director Johanna Anderson expressed thanks to the County for what she called “a herculean task,” to make sure that money that was invested in Tompkins County will stay in Tompkins County.

Contact: Anna Kelles, Chair, Housing and Economic Development Committee, 342-2036; Megan McDonald, Deputy Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability, 607-274-5560.

Also related to the Airport project, several people addressed the Legislature during Privilege of the Floor, expressing concern about the Airport expansion, specifically concerns about the U.S. Customs facility that is an element of the project. Some expressed fear that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) could take advantage of the facility, others concern about impact on climate change. Both Legislature Chair Martha Robertson and County Administrator Jason Molino responded. “This is not a dangerous facility, this is under our control,” Robertson said. “...There will not be tolerance for ICE coming into this facility, period.” Administrator Molino noted there will be no access for anyone without going through security clearance, and that under the Memorandum of Understanding governing the facility the Legislature will be able to terminate for any reason with 90 days notice.

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