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*Inclusion Through
Diversity*

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Highlights of the **June 15th, 2021** meeting of the
Tompkins County Legislature

Discussions Begin on Use of American Rescue Plan Funds

Interim Tompkins County Administrator Lisa Holmes presented an overview of the \$19.8 million of one-time American Rescue Plan funds made available to the County, including key dates, restrictions on use of the funds, and options for use of the funding for one-time expenses in the Capital Program. Holmes explained that proposals regarding the Capital Program would enable more flexibility in target funding for departments and agencies as well as long-term budget stability and fund balance while supporting emissions reduction goals that were adjusted during the pandemic.

The presentation outlined the 2021 budget impacts on the County from the pandemic including the elimination of 47 full time equivalent positions (inclusive of 41 retirements), a 6% (\$11.5M) reduction in spending, capital program and agency funding cuts, and reduced sales tax.

Legislator Shawna Black (D-Ithaca) expressed interest in long-term investments that would save local tax dollars needed for large capital improvements and expenditures. Legislator Martha Robertson (D-Dryden) sought further clarification on uses for the funding, including whether it might be used for smaller one-time projects such as facets of the Reimagining Public Safety plan and on the potential use for projects in the areas of infrastructure and public health.

Legislator Deborah Dawson (D-Lansing) shared that this is the beginning of conversations, adding to the perspective that investments made with this one-time money can make long-lasting impacts on savings and the freeing up of other County resources. Legislature Chairwoman Leslyn McBean-Clairborne (D-Ithaca) shared that the returns from these investments are intended to benefit the entire community.

On June 15, the Legislature released a survey seeking community input on the use for the funds. The survey and more details can be found on the County's website, <https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/news/tompkins-county-seeks-community-input-use-american-rescue-plan-funds>.

Michael Stitley Confirmed as Next Director of Department of Emergency Response

[*Photos for media use*](#)

Tompkins County Interim Administrator Lisa Holmes welcomed Michael Stitley, sharing that he has, "Worked in a variety of settings, and has served as an emergency manager during many situations including hurricanes and Superstorm Sandy in New Jersey." She continued with confidence that he will "advance the goals of the department given his work and lifelong commitment to this work... he has been in this line of work since joining a volunteer rescue

squad at the age of 15.” Stitley thanked legislators for their confidence in his abilities and shared that he is looking forward to meeting the County’s team and community. Stitley comes to Tompkins County having most recently been the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator & Interim Security Manager for Guthrie Health System. Stitley was confirmed unanimously (14-0).

Legislator Martha Robertson (D-Dryden) welcomed Stitley and thanked outgoing Acting Director, Brian Robison stating, “Brian served for two years in the position and did a tremendous amount – he had been a retired police officer and County Legislator and pulled the department through tough times and big transitions.”

Resolution Passes Approving Community Justice Center Staffing

The Legislature passed a resolution (13-1, Legislator Mike Sigler opposing) approving two positions to staff the Community Justice Center and implement the Reimagining Public Safety plan. The positions of Project Director and Data Analyst will be supported equally by the County and City of Ithaca and recruitment for candidates will begin shortly.

Legislator Leslie Schill (D-Ithaca) stated, “These are exciting new positions, for people in my district this is a really important issue and folks are very interested. They want to talk about how we change the face of public safety.”

Among Other Business

A resolution urging that New York State follow the borders of Tompkins County in the upcoming congressional redistricting process to include the entire County in the area represented by one Congressperson passed unanimously (14-0).

Regarding the recruitment for the next Tompkins County Administrator, Legislators unanimously opted for a hybrid approach retaining a recruitment firm for outreach, with the Human Resources Department managing processes screening and interviewing candidates. Various options were presented by Human Resources Commissioner Ruby Pulliam and considered by the Budget Capital and Personnel Committee and the full Legislature. The proposed search timeline would have the job description posted in late summer with the selection and offer before the end of 2021.

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