

**Tompkins County Legislature**  
**Public Hearing**  
**November 10, 2008**

Approved 12/2/08

**Call to Order**

Chair Koplinka-Loehr called the public hearing to order at 7:03 p.m. concerning the 2009 Tompkins County Budget and 2009-2013 Capital Program. He asked if anyone wished to speak.

John Neuman, Taughannock Boulevard, and member of the Chamber of Commerce Board, said to date it is very clear that a laudable and impressive effort has been made by the Legislature to reign in cost pressures and cost increases and recognize the decreasing revenue/support base from New York State. He also believes that if a target were set today, rather than in the spring, it would be lower due to the financial difficulties faced today. In addition he believes there are opportunities, some just outside County government, for collaboration, consolidation, redundancies of services and organizations around the Central New York State area. A number of studies show diminishing or no returns from consolidation efforts in other states. Mr. Neuman said given the fact that the economy is not likely to improve in the near future contingent planning should take a precedence and be ready to implement if necessary.

Jean McPheeters, Bailor Road, and President of the Chamber of Commerce, supports the comments of Mr. Neuman. She spoke of her previous membership on the Community Advisory Panel and one of the important issues discussed was the need for program evaluation. Although she knows there have been efforts toward this she believes it should be implemented in order to know how to best represent the people of Tompkins County.

Michael E. Lane, Village of Dryden, congratulated the Legislature on the budget. He urged the Legislature to clearly express to Albany not to shift the State's deficit to the counties. He also believes there is a need to eliminate the sales tax for clothing and shoes to make it more competitive with surrounding counties that have done so. He does not anticipate next year's sales tax receipts to be as strong as they have been due to the economy. With regard to rollover he believes it should be eliminated in order to assist with maintaining the fund balance. He expressed appreciation to looking at the tax-levy increase rather than the tax rate. He noted the Town of Ithaca did not do this and believes the County set a good example.

Fay Gougakis, City of Ithaca, spoke against funding the Tompkins County Public Library unless a contingency requiring no cellular phone use in the library was exercised. She spoke of conversations with people from other communities and countries that have stated no cellular phone use in the library is standard where they reside. Ms. Gougakis then spoke of the increase in crime in the community and her passion to be able to accurately review the statistics and reality.

No one else wished to speak and the public hearing was closed at 7:22 p.m.