



Tompkins County Legislature

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Recognizing and Thanking Joe Mareane for His Years of Public Service to the Residents of Tompkins County

WHEREAS, the members of the Tompkins County Legislature with an abundance of gratitude wish to recognize and thank Joe Mareane for his years of dedicated and tireless service to the residents and employees of Tompkins County, upon his retirement from a 37-year career in local government, and

WHEREAS, Joe is a product of the Midwest, having earned his Bachelor's degree from Indiana University. However, he became a New Yorker when he earned his Master's in Public Administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University in 1979, which is why we are wearing orange/Syracuse gear tonight, and

WHEREAS, from the beginning of his career in 1979 through 1993, Joe served the City of Syracuse, as Assessment Commissioner, Director of Management and Budget, and Director of Development, and

WHEREAS, Joe briefly left public service for the dark side, to work with the Pyramid Companies in developing the Palisades Center, and as a Vice President of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. He came to his senses in 1996 and returned to local government, serving 12 years as Chief Fiscal Officer for Onondaga County, and

WHEREAS, Joe became Tompkins County Administrator in October 2008, just as the Great Recession was beginning, clearly an excellent moment to assume fiscal responsibility for a county of 110,000 souls, a \$165 million budget, and a 750-person workforce engaged in programs that range from aging services to youth programs, and literally everything in between, and

WHEREAS, steering Tompkins County through the fiscal crisis of the Great Recession was Joe's overriding project for the following years, a project he performed with consummate wisdom, empathy, skill, and humor, so that we were able to maintain critical county services for our residents and shield our workforce from the layoffs that many local governments endured, and

WHEREAS, in addition to the overarching responsibility of creating and managing the county budget for nine years, and getting us to pass it, Joe's many accomplishments included the following, in no particular order:

- Developing and organizing proposals from the County and our partner municipalities, for funding through the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, in the long-ago days when we dared to dream of receiving federal money for anything;
- Restructuring our internal budget documents and public information on the budget, and creating an Inventory and Impact Assessment of all County programs;
- Managing state reimbursement cuts, mandate increases, and soaring pension costs, while magically getting our Bond rating upgraded to AA1, with the negative outlook removed;
- Creating and guiding the Indigent Defense Task Force and implementing its recommendations, establishing Tompkins County as a state-wide leader in the field;
- As a result, getting named to and serving on New York State's Indigent Legal Services Board;
- Organizing a review of the current structure of town and village courts through the Municipal Courts Task Force;

- Recognizing the importance of Don Barber's work, they together built the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium from the ground up, spreading its reach into Cortland and Cayuga Counties;
- Leading TCCOG (Tompkins County Council of Governments) to become a robust and effective organization for intermunicipal policy development and collaboration including the creation of the TCCOG training academy;
- Initiating "Smart Work" projects that used technology and employee ingenuity to create greater value for taxpayers;
- Managing the complex set of steps to optimize the County's facilities: analyzing the Center of Government proposal, and moving the Health Department to Brown Rd., COFA to the Human Services Annex, the Legislature to the Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building, the Day Reporting Program to the Human Services Building, and County Records to the Seneca Army Depot;
- Selling the CHHA (Certified Home Health Agency), selling the Biggs Building, and selling the Old Library (almost!);
- Buying the Tompkins Trust Building (almost!);
- Spearheading the major upgrade of the Emergency Operations Center, with major new technology systems, professionalized training, and enhanced staffing, leading to full accreditation. Showing up at the Emergency Center during snowstorms, hurricanes, and sieges in Danby;
- Leading an innovative study of the Civil Service system, including a proposal to NYS for modifications to enhance the diversity of the County workforce;
- Installing solar thermal systems at two County facilities and solar panels on seven County buildings, and refurbishing a hydro plant for the County's electricity;
- Dealing with hydrilla, OMIG audits, and collective bargaining;
- Lobbying in Albany, making presentations to NYSAC, and consulting with Cortland County on their budget process;
- Creating sustainable funding models for TCAT (mortgage recording tax), TCAD (County and Tourism funding), and the Library (good old property taxes);
- Restructuring departmental leadership in Mental Health, together with Public Health;
- Creating the County's Shared Services Panel and the resulting Shared Services Plan;
- Implementing the countywide *Swift911* Mass-Notification Alert System, as the first step in that Shared Services Plan;
- Participating in the Bicentennial Commission, even though he would not wear a Governor Tompkins hat in the Ithaca Festival parade;
- Instituting the Cup of Joe gatherings and getting initially-reluctant County employees to thoroughly enjoy them;
- Writing personal notes to staff when they lost a loved one, toasting our employees at the annual 25-year award dinner, and getting dunked at the annual picnic;
- Working harder than any five of the rest of us;
- And more.

NOW THEREFORE WE, the members of the Tompkins County Legislature, on behalf of the residents of Tompkins County and the employees of the Tompkins County government, do hereby extend our deepest appreciation to Joe Mareane for his unparalleled and unstinting public service throughout his career, and send him our very warmest wishes for a healthy and happy retirement. We regret, however, that we cannot quite bring ourselves to proclaim today Syracuse Orange Day, even though the basketball team slammed Oakland yesterday (Yeah, we googled it.).