

**Tompkins County Council of Governments**  
 Regular Meeting Minutes - APPROVED  
**Thursday, January 22, 2015 3:00 PM**  
 Scott Heyman Conference Room

**Attendance**

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Irene Weiser	Member - Town of Caroline	Present	
Ric Dietrich	Member, Town of Danby	Present	
Jason Liefer	Member - Town of Dryden	Present	
Ruth Hopkins	Alternate, Town of Lansing	Present	
Ann Rider	Co-Chair, Town of Enfield	Present	
Kelly Smith	Member, Town of Groton	Present	
Bill Goodman	Member - Alternate, Town of Ithaca	Present	4:25 pm
Elizabeth Thomas	Member - Town of Ulysses	Present	4:30 pm
Jim Zimmer	Member, Village of Dryden	Present	
Kate Supron	Member - Village of Cayuga Heights	Present	
Chuck Rankin	Member - Alternate, Village of Groton	Present	
Marty Petrovic	Member, Village of Trumansburg	Present	
Linda Lavine	Alternate - Town of Dryden	Present	
Joe Mareane	Tompkins County Administrator	Present	
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present	
Julia P. Hughes	Program Coordinator, Assigned Counsel Program	Present	
Michelle Pottorff	Minute Taker, Legislature Office	Present	

**Call to Order**

Ms. Rider, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

**Greeting/Sign In/Review Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Minutes Approval**

Thursday, October 23, 2014

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [10 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Ric Dietrich, Member, Town of Danby
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Irene Weiser, Member - Town of Caroline
<b>AYES:</b>	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Rankin
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Kate Supron, Marty Petrovic

Thursday, November 20, 2014

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [10 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Ric Dietrich, Member, Town of Danby
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Irene Weiser, Member - Town of Caroline
<b>AYES:</b>	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Rankin
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Kate Supron, Marty Petrovic

Thursday, December 18, 2014

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED [11 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Irene Weiser, Member - Town of Caroline
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Kate Supron, Member - Village of Cayuga Heights
<b>AYES:</b>	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Supron, Rankin
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Marty Petrovic

### Shared Services Report

Mr. Mareane reported the subcommittee is looking at four functional areas where there may be opportunities for shared service savings. They are continuing to look at a high level at law enforcement and highways but have been focusing on centralized administrative services. The next detailed discussion of a potentially centralized service is in the area of training where there is already shared services taking place with the TC3 Supervisory training. There will be a meeting on February 9th that will be in the Human Services Annex building and will be structured as an idea exchange. Human resources professionals from the Town and City of Ithaca and Tompkins County will be sharing ideas and being facilitators to what he hopes will be a larger discussion about what might be able to be done in the area of training.

Ms. Supron said on January 29<sup>th</sup> there will be a meeting of the group overseeing the exploration of the four areas that have been identified. She reported she met with the B.O.C.E.S. Superintendent and said there are nine school districts that form the school consortium and their 1% in savings represents \$1.5 million and they are hoping to meet with elected officials to talk about ways school districts might work with municipalities to reach shared services goals. She will again provide members with the link to the shared services spreadsheet and asked those who have not completed the survey to do so.

Mr. Mareane said if after taking a high level approach to looking at areas where there can be shared services it is found that there is merit the next step will be taking a detailed review of the area. After taking a high-level exploratory review of the court system they will be transitioning into a more detailed review of whether there are opportunities for realignment that will result in either cost-effectiveness or improved consistency in the quality of municipal courts. He included in the agenda packet a briefing memorandum that highlights areas that were looked at in the high-level review, what was found, and recommendations. He noted he conducted the review and reported on the findings, observations, recommendations, and the conclusion he came to during the process.

The recommendations contained in the memo are as follows:

- TCCOG should *not* undertake a review of the municipal court system as a part of the current effort to identify high-yield, money-saving ventures for submission in the 2015 Government Efficiency Plan.
- However, TCCOG *should* consider reviewing the structure of municipal courts on a separate path that may take longer than allowed under the tax freeze statute and that would be directed toward finding alternative models aimed at improving the consistent quality of service without increasing local costs.
- If TCCOG chooses to undertake that review, I would recommend the appointment of a group of ten or so knowledgeable, experienced, and community-minded individuals to identify and analyze alternative models, without regard to limitations imposed by existing State Law, and to return within 6-12 months with a more comprehensive cost analysis and recommendations. Those recommendations may or may not include a departure from the current justice court system. The panel's report would include the estimated cost of their recommended model and any changes in State Law required to implement the plan. Again, the fiscal goal would be cost-neutrality.

When asked who Mr. Mareane met with he said he spoke with individuals who have been City Court Judges, a magistrate, an individual on both the prosecution and defense side, and the Assigned Counsel Program to get a balance of perspectives. Ms. Weiser suggested that the Advocacy Center be used as a resource as well. Mr. Mareane said if this moves forward groups like the Advocacy Center will be brought into the process.

Ms. Weiser referred to the chart on criminal caseloads and asked if it represents the number of cases that were charged or the number of cases that were adjudicated to be criminal by the judge. Mr. Mareane said he will check but believes it is based on the cases that came to the court. Mr. Dietrich asked if the political parties have been consulted; Mr. Mareane said this has been reported on in the media but he has not approached party leaders.

Mr. Leifer spoke in support of the resolution and said this is something that should be done. As an attorney he believes the sense of justice being uneven is true and he said an individual can have a totally different outcome from one town to another with the same charge. Court hours and court staffing are also issues. Mr. Leifer said this is a large unfunded mandate and believes some type of consolidation would not only save money but would result in improved quality.

Ms. Rider stressed that it would take at least a year in order to do a reasonable job to come up with a recommendation and it is not for the purpose of achieving a cost savings but for a more-even application of justice which might lead to some savings.

Ms. Weiser encouraged everyone to use the word "resident" instead of "citizen" as there are many people who reside in the community who are cared about and they may not have citizenship.

**Resolution No. 001-2015: RECOMMENDING A CITIZEN'S PANEL UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF THE TOWN AND VILLAGE COURT SYSTEM WITHIN TOMPKINS COUNTY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSING POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONAL REALIGNMENTS THAT MAY RESULT IN COST OR QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS (ID #5347):**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Elizabeth Thomas, Member - Town of Ulysses
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jason Liefer, Member - Town of Dryden
<b>AYES:</b>	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Supron, Rankin, Petrovic

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Council of Governments has established a Shared Services Committee (“Committee”) to consider areas where structural changes may result in greater efficiency or effectiveness, and

WHEREAS, the Committee has focused its attention on four functional areas, including Highways, Public Safety, Administrative Services, and the Municipal Courts, and

WHEREAS, the Committee’s approach to the review of these functional areas is to undertake an initial exploratory review to determine whether improvements may result from structural changes such as mergers, consolidations, and shared services and, if so, to undertake a more rigorous and detailed review to confirm that improvements are possible and to make specific recommendations regarding the implementation of changes and

WHEREAS, the Committee has undertaken such an exploratory review of the Town and Village Court system and has concluded that, while cost savings are unlikely, recommendations regarding qualitative improvements may result from a rigorous and detailed review undertaken by local individuals knowledgeable in the court and criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, such a panel would operate only in an advisory capacity, and would exist to provide knowledgeable input to local policy-makers, and

WHEREAS, an efficient and effective justice system is in the interest of all of TCCOG’s member municipalities and citizens of those municipalities, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins Council of Governments hereby endorses the creation of a panel that will review on its behalf the current structure and operations of the municipal court system for the purpose of identifying potential ways and means to sustain and improve the efficiency of operations and quality of justice provided by the town and village courts,

RESOLVED, further, That the Shared Services Committee will identify potential members of the panel and will report its recommendations to the TCCOG Board for its approval.

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**Presentation on Domestic Violence Information by the Advocacy Center**

Ms. Brundige, Director of the Global Center for Women and Justice at the Global Justice Clinic at Cornell Law School explained there is a Law School course that works on projects that seek to advance gender justice and human rights. During the past semester they collaborated with the Advocacy Center in drafting a resolution that recognizes freedom from domestic violence as a fundamental human right. She introduced Joanne Joseph and Carolyn Matos, students, who talked about why they believe a resolution like this would be valuable.

Ms. Joseph explained that one of the reasons the resolution was drafted was because of the story of Jessica Lenahan who was abused by her ex-husband and who killed her three daughters. In a landmark case Ms. Lenahan sued the town she was from because she had called the police several times to report he

had abducted her children; however, they did not respond. The lawsuit was based on the town's failing to enforce her restraining order and then the United States Supreme Court found they do not Constitutionally protected her right to the enforcement of the restraining order. Ms. Lenahan then went to a human rights tribunal and they found the United States had been in violation of her human rights by not enforcing the restraining order. Ms. Joseph said because of this they believe the human rights approach casts a wider net and that a human rights approach takes the issue from the private sphere to a more public sphere which they believe is very important.

Ms. Matos said they believe domestic violence is a societal problem that requires a societal solution and this resolution is the first step to address that. Domestic Violence does not only affect women; it affects both men and women. There are 1.3 million women and 835,000 men in the nation who have reported domestic violence cases and there are many more cases that go unreported. Ms. Matos said they have done a lot of community outreach and circulated a sample of the photo campaign.

Ms. Campbell said they have been pleased to work with the Global Center on this and stated it very much connects with the local work done in Tompkins County. She said the Advocacy Center is the one organization in Tompkins County that provides supportive services to domestic violence, sexual assault, and child sexual abuse. Last year the agency provided services to over 1,500 youth and adults in Tompkins County. She noted the services were to individuals who reached out to them and there are many more who do not reach out or who do not know of the services the agency provides. They work very collaboratively with many other services providers, attorneys, law enforcement personnel, and the court systems in the community and Ms. Campbell said Tompkins County is viewed as a leader in the State on this issue.

**Resolution No. 002-2015: Resolution of the Tompkins County Council of Governments Declaring Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Human Right (ID #5348):**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Kate Supron, Member - Village of Cayuga Heights
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Irene Weiser, Member - Town of Caroline
<b>AYES:</b>	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Supron, Rankin, Petrovic

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Council of Governments seeks to enhance the public welfare by declaring that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse, intimidation, isolation, and coercive control by intimate partners or family members, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a human rights concern that affects individuals of every gender, sexual orientation, race, age, nationality, religion, and economic status, and

WHEREAS, survivors of domestic violence must deal with the effects of physical injuries, long-term psychological damage, financial and career instability, and trouble finding safe housing, and

WHEREAS, domestic violence has a deeply negative impact on children who are exposed to it, and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County answered 2,055 calls on its domestic violence and sexual assault hotline and served 212 new adult domestic violence clients,

including providing shelter for 37 adults and their 25 children and helping 72 individuals obtain final orders of protection from the courts, and

WHEREAS, the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, with Cornell Law School's Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and Global Gender Justice Clinic, released a report in October 2014, "Recognizing Freedom from Domestic Violence as a Fundamental Human Right," which compiled international, national, state, and local statistics supporting the need for greater government involvement in preventing and responding to domestic violence, and

WHEREAS, the report cites Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics noting that more than 1 in 3 women and more than 1 in 4 men in the United States will experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetimes, and

WHEREAS, according to the report, 87 women and men in New York State died as a result of intimate partner homicide in 2013, and

WHEREAS, according to the report, in 2013, law enforcement agencies in New York State outside of New York City responded to 189,152 domestic violence incidents and reported 31,106 assaults committed by intimate partners, 80% of which were committed against women, and

WHEREAS, the report notes that New York State courts issued 300,236 orders of protection in 2013, nearly 210,000 of which were required to be recorded in the Unified Court System's Domestic Violence Registry, and

WHEREAS the report further notes that in Tompkins County, law enforcement agencies reported an average of 147 victims of domestic violence offences per year between 2010 and 2013, and

WHEREAS, social service agencies, law enforcement, courts, cities, towns, villages, and other local government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence, and

WHEREAS, the United Nations has recognized that freedom from domestic violence is a human right affecting the realization of many other rights and freedoms and that governments have a responsibility to prevent and respond to such violence, and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found in *Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v. United States* that the United States' failure to protect women from gender-based violence constitutes discrimination and a human rights violation and urged the United States to enact law and policy reforms at all levels to protect survivors of domestic violence and their children, and

WHEREAS, law enforcement, courts, cities, counties, towns, villages, social service agencies, and other local government entities constitute the first line of defense against domestic violence, and

WHEREAS, over the past 25 years, Tompkins County has been a leader in domestic violence response by introducing a number of initiatives, including the establishment of an Integrated Domestic Violence Court, and

WHEREAS, by recognizing that freedom from domestic violence is a human right, the Tompkins County Council of Governments will raise awareness and enhance domestic violence response and education in communities, the public and private sectors, and within government departments, now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Tompkins County Council of Governments:

1. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments joins world leaders and leaders in the United States in recognition of domestic violence as a human rights concern and declares that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right;
2. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments believes that state and local governments should continue to secure this human right on behalf of their citizens;
3. That this resolution shall serve as a charge to all local governments in Tompkins County to ensure that their policies and practices are informed by the principles contained in this resolution and by domestic violence survivors' voices and needs;
4. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments will support the county's and human service agencies' efforts to prevent domestic violence, strengthen the response to domestic violence, and improve the provision of services to survivors;
5. That the Tompkins County Council of Governments shall consider undertaking, together with community partners, a study of the causes of local domestic violence incidents and of the gaps and barriers in local governments' service delivery to survivors of domestic violence, with the goals of preventing domestic violence, strengthening the county-wide response to domestic violence, and improving the provision of services to survivors; and
6. That a copy of this resolution shall be sent to the City and Village Mayors and Town Supervisors in Tompkins County, the Honorable Members of the Tompkins County Legislature, the Tompkins County Office of Human Rights, the Tompkins County Sheriff, the Police Chiefs for the Villages of Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Groton, and Trumansburg, the Cornell University Police Chief, the Ithaca College Public Safety Director, the Tompkins Cortland Community College Campus Safety Director, the New York State Police Troop C Station Commander, the Tompkins County District Attorney, the judges in Tompkins County, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, Senate Majority Coalition Leaders Dean Skelos and Jeff Klein, Senators James Seward, Thomas O'Mara, and Michael Nozzolio, and the media.

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### **Report from Sustainability Committee**

Ms. Weiser introduced Emelie Cupernell and Ethan MacCormick from Ithaca based Performance System Development who gave a brief overview of the work they are doing on a home energy rating program. It was explained that a rating is a way to evaluate the energy efficiency of a home and what to expect from energy use in a house. Their goal is by the end of the first quarter of next year to have a home energy rating project in place that would integrate the home energy market in a way that would help meet sustainability goals. They will be targeting the existing home market and will involve representatives from many areas included realtors, contractors, and government leaders. They are looking to determine how to integrate the home energy market in a way that would help meet sustainability goals by the end of 2015.

**Discussion of TCCOG Potential Funding Requests in 2015**

**Resolution No. 003-2015: Resolution in Support of Grant Application to Create a Web-based Mapping System as Part of the Trails Mapping Project (ID #5412):**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Kate Supron, Member - Village of Cayuga Heights
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Irene Weiser, Member - Town of Caroline
<b>AYES:</b>	Weiser, Dietrich, Liefer, Hopkins, Rider, Smith, Goodman, Thomas, Zimmer, Supron, Rankin, Petrovic

RESOLVED, that the Tompkins County Council of Governments supports the grant application by the Town of Ulysses on behalf of the Tompkins County Parks and Trails Network for development of a web-based mapping system that will help direct tourists and local residents to hiking, biking and skiing trails throughout Tompkins County.

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**Assisting TCCOG with State Issues**

Mr. Goodman was excused at this time.

Mr. Mareane introduced Charlie Kruzansky and Gary Stewart. Mr. Kruzansky said Cornell's interests often align with local municipalities quite often and offered assistance to members in communicating with the State. He said he is Albany a lot as well as Ithaca and said his door is open for any member who needs his help, even if it is only to get in contact with someone. Mr. Dietrich spoke of a NYSERDA grant he has applied for and said he is looking for a contact person at NYSERDA. Mr. Kruzansky offered to assist him with this.

Ms. Thomas was excused at 4:30 p.m.

**Elect 2015 Leadership**

It was MOVED by Ms. Supron, seconded by Ms. Smith, to nominate Irene Weiser, Town of Caroline, to serve as Vice Chair for 2015. There were no other nominations. A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes - 10, Noes - 0. MOTION CARRIED.

**Next Meeting Agenda Items**

The following items were suggested for the next agenda:

- 2015 Annual Equity Maintenance Program;
- Principle Secure Investment of Municipal Funds;
- Overview of where energy ratings process is;
- Discussion of Scope and Rationale of TCCOG funding requests; and
- Gifting rules for municipalities (invite County Attorney)

**Adjournment**

On motion the meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.