Tompkins County Shared Services Panel

Meeting #6

September 6, 2017

Tompkins County Legislature Chambers

6:00PM – 7:30 PM

1. Introductions
2. Minutes Approval – July 19, 2017
3. Public Hearing #3—Final Shared Services Plan
4. Summary of County Legislature Review and Resolution
5. Recap of Final Plan and Explanation of “Appendix A”
6. Action Item: Approval of Final Shared Services Plan
7. Adjourn

Resolution No. 2017-159: Endorsing the Shared-Services Plan Presented by the County Administrator and Recommending its Adoption by the Tompkins County Shared-Services Panel (ID #7187)

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER:** Rich John, Member

**SECONDER:** Anna Kelles, Member

**AYES:** Will Burbank, Carol Chock, James Dennis, Rich John, Anna Kelles, Dooley Kiefer, Daniel Klein, Michael Lane, Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Martha Robertson, David McKenna, Glenn Morey, Michael Sigler, Peter Stein

WHEREAS, as a part of the 2017-2018 New York State Budget, the “Countywide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Law” was enacted that required counties to form a Shared Services Panel (“Panel”) comprised of the mayors and supervisors of municipalities within the County, charged with developing and adopting a Shared Services Plan (“Plan”) by September 15, 2017, and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 2017-77, this Legislature designated the County Administrator as the County’s Chief Executive Officer as defined in the Shared Services Law and authorized him to form a Shared Services Panel and serve as its Chair, and

WHEREAS, the Panel met five times, conducted two public hearings, and has presented its recommendations to the Legislature in a Report dated July 19, 2017, and

WHEREAS, the Shared-Services proposed in the Panel’s Report include:

· The creation of a Tompkins County Council of Governments Training Academy, coordinated by TC3.biz, to serve as a vehicle to provide affordable, high-quality training to all local governments in the County;

· The creation of a Service Modernization Plan by the County Clerk intended to enable all local governments in the County to automate a number of routine paper-intensive tasks currently done by hand;

· The creation and management of a Purchasing Pool to facilitate the lowest-cost acquisition of contemporary financial software by all interested local governments within the County;

· The acquisition and operation of a Countywide Mass Notification System, funded and managed by the County and available to all local governments within the County;

· The creation and management of a Purchasing Pool to facilitate the conversion of municipal streetlights to high-efficiency environmentally friendly LED fixtures; and

· The expansion of the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium to include two additional members, including the Town of Newfield, resulting in a $34,875 savings to the Town, and sustaining substantial recurring savings to all of its members; and

WHEREAS, the Panel’s report also anticipates the Panel undertaking additional exploration of several other potential shared-service initiatives that may result in future savings, and

WHEREAS, this Legislature has reviewed the Panel’s Report and supports its findings, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That this Legislature endorses the Shared Services Plan of July 19, 2017 submitted by the Shared Services Panel, and recommends formal adoption of the Plan by the Shared Services Panel on or before the September 15th deadline established by New York State.

**SEQR ACTION**: TYPE II-20

Draft Minutes

Tompkins County Shared Services Panel

July 19, 2017

5:30-7:00 PM

Tompkins County Legislative Chambers

Members Present: M. Witmer, R.Dietrich, D.Scheffler, B. Goodman, E.Thomas, J.Hart, L.Woodard, J.Leifer, D.Hartill, M.Murphy, J.Mareane

Staff/Guests Present: Richard Tobe, Governor’s Office; Liz Berkowski, Governor’s Office; Paula Younger Dep. County Administrator; Marcia Lynch, County Public Information Officer

Mr. Mareane opened the meeting at 5:30 PM. He noted the presence of two members of the Governor’s Office, Richard Tobe and Liz Berkowski, and offered them an opportunity to address the Panel following the public hearing.

Following the introduction of Panel members, Mr. Mareane opened the public hearing at 5:35 PM, advising speakers that they may offer comments on the draft Shared Services Plan that has been published in a number of number of places, or provide other suggestions to the Panel.

Brian Eden, member of the County’s Environmental Management Council, spoke in favor of Recommendation #5 that proposes a collaborative approach to the conversion of streetlights to LED fixtures, noting the reduced energy consumption associated with LEDs. He cautioned the Panel about adverse environmental and public health effects of a certain type of “blue light” in the LED light spectrum, and provided an “Environmental Alert” from the Emergency Management Council that provides guidelines and recommendations about how to avoid the problem.

There being no other speakers, Mr. Mareane closed the public hearing at 5:45 PM, but indicated that he would accept further comment if other speakers arrived later.

Mr. Mareane then invited the Governor’s Representative, Richard Tobe, to address the Panel. Mr. Tobe thanked the Panel for its work on the Shared Service Plan and for the opportunity to speak. He said other counties are trying to model their Plans on our Health consortium model, as are 28 counties that have indicated their interest in looking at health benefits consortia. He said the State is learning about places where State law gets in the way of local shared service initiatives, and is open to input about these kinds of “common sense” changes that could help achieve our goals. He said many counties are also considering changes in their town and village court systems, and finding many legal obstacles standing in the way of change, including the absence of State law regarding village court mergers or dissolutions. Obstacles exist, too, on shared court facilities.

Mr. Tobe said that many communities are planning to continue the process on an on-going basis. Some will delay submission of their plan until next year; he expects about half of the counties to submit their plans this year. He said his office can also facilitate meetings with local governments and state agencies to assess opportunities to work together on major projects such as energy improvements, wastewater, etc.

Mr. Goodman said several members may be interested in talking to the State about wastewater issues. He also asked whether there will be matching funds program next year for counties, like ours, who are also planning to submit for matching funds in 2018.

Ms. Thomas asked about the prohibitions in State law regarding towns establishing a fire department. Mr. Tobe said this is not an area of his expertise, but was not aware that the question has come up elsewhere.

Mr. Mareane said that Don Barber and others would be willing and able to help pinpoint obstacles in Article 47 that make it difficult for other counties to form health consortia. He also offered to share the report of the Courts Task Force with the State. He noted that the Panel does plan to stay together to be able to explore more complex shared service possibilities after the Plan is submitted. Mr. Tobe said a task force is working to look at problems in the health insurance area, and would welcome our input.

Mr. Mareane thanked Mr. Tobe and Ms. Berkowski for attending tonight’s meeting, and invited them to stay for the full meeting.

At that time, Mr. Mareane asked if anyone else had arrived who would like to offer comments to the Panel. Seeing a hand, he re-opened the Public Hearing to accept additional comments.

Bill Evans of the Town of Danby encouraged a cautious approach to Recommendation #5 which pertains to LED Streetlights. Mr. Evans has conducted research on the effects of lighting on insects and birds, and has shared his research and concerns with the EMC. He noted a deadline of Spetember 1st for municipalities to purchase lights from NYSEG that are now leased. He said there is a 9-12 month process to buy the lights after a decision was made. The benefits of ownership include greater latitude in deciding what kinds of lights to install and relieves municipalities of high maintenance fees. He also said municipalities can stick with their current leasing agreements with NYSEG. A shared approach will be difficult given the September deadline to make decisions. He said there is much research underway on “blue rich” lights in streetlights, smart phones, and residential light. He said a rollout of blue-rich streetlights in Davis California led to a residential revolt that led to a reversal of the plan. He said we now have High Pressure Sodium lights that are a warm yellow light, and encouraged a conversion to remain with that color rather than the blue rich lights that create skyglow and other negative effects.

There were no other speakers, and the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Mareane then proceeded to summarize the final draft of the plan, noting that the items pertaining to wastewater and storm water have been put into a new category that recognizes the need for a collaborative approach, but that the nature of the projects doesn’t seem to lend itself to the current shared services initiative.

The final draft of the Shared Services Plan (attached) was reviewed item by item. At the conclusion of the review of the near-term items that will be the basis of the Plan submitted to the State, Mr. Mareane asked members if they would like to offer any amendments, or if additional items should be added. The Panel offered no changes. Mr. Mareane asked if the Panel accepted the near-term items as described in the report. There was a unanimous consensus in support of the Plan.

Mr. Mareane then reviewed the items that will require additional study by the Panel, and asked if there is agreement on the list and the intent of members to undertake a review of the potential benefits and costs of each in the coming few years. After Mr. Mareane assured Ms. Thomas’s that all of the items on the list would not be reviewed over the next year, the Panel agreed that additional study would be undertaken on these items. In response to a questions from Ms. Thomas about the order of priority, Mr. Mareane said his personal preference would be to look first at the shared back office services.

Lastly, the Panel agreed that the wastewater and stormwater items should be looked at differently than the other shared service items, but that we should flag the State now about any need for aid or assistance to move these items forward.

With all elements of the Plan approved, Mr. Mareane said the next step will be to present the Plan to the County Legislature, beginning with the Government Operations Committee. The Legislature will return the Plan, with or without recommended modifications, to the Panel for a formal vote prior to September 15th. When the Plan returns to the Panel, a vote of the members will be taken. If a member votes in opposition to the plan, the State law requires a statement explaining his or her negative vote. Also, at the time of the final vote any municipality can choose to opt-out of any element of the plan.

Members of the Panel expressed appreciation for the work that has been done to bring this process to a favorable conclusion.

Mr. Mareane asked for the minutes of the July 5th meeting to be approved. The Panel unanimously approved the minutes.

Mr. Mareane expressed his great appreciation to the Panel members for their engagement in the process and for contributing ideas and proposals that will be of benefit to the taxpayers.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.