

APPROVED

**Tompkins County Council of Governments
May 28, 2009
3 p.m.
Scott Heyman Conference Room**

Members Present: T/Ithaca – H. Engman
V/Cayuga Heights – G. Gilmore
V/Lansing – D. Hartill
T/Ulysses – E. Thomas
T/Dryden - M. Sumner
T/Caroline – D. Barber
T/Enfield – R. Barriere
T/Newfield – R. Dolge
V/Trumansburg – D. Nottke
Tompkins County - M. Robertson
T/Danby – R. Dietrich
C/Ithaca – C. Peterson
V/Groton – B. Conger
T/Groton – G. Morey
V/Dryden – C. Becker
T/Lansing – B. Shattuck

Municipalities Not in Attendance V/Freeville

Guests: S. Locey, Locey and Cahill, LLC; M. Lynch, J. Mareane, J. Kippola, P. Younger, County Administration; L. Shawley, Town of Danby; M. Koplinka-Loehr, County Legislature; P. Dougherty, Town of Enfield Deputy Clerk; S. Whicher, P. Pryor, S. Beeners, J. Leifer, Citizens; D. Sanders, SMSI Project Manager; L. Shurtleff, Department of Emergency Response; D. Frongillo, Town of Caroline; G. Potter, Information Technology Services; S. Shackford, Ithaca Journal; E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; D. Lamb, Congressman Hinchey's Office

Call to Order

Mr. Barber, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of April 23, 2009

It was MOVED by Mr. Gilmore (V/Cayuga Heights), seconded by Mr. Dolge (T/Newfield), and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of April 23, 2009 as submitted. MINUTES APPROVED.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes made to the agenda.

At this time introductions were made of all in attendance.

SMSI Health Insurance Consortium

Mr. Locey distributed information relating to the 2010 Consortium premium equivalent rates. The analysis compares the current 2009 premiums paid by each employer with the anticipated 2010 premiums each would be charged by the Consortium. The analysis did not take into consideration the increase in premiums each employer would experience if they were to maintain their current coverage in a traditional insurance model.

Mr. Locey said on an overall basis the increase for the Consortium as a whole is less than four percent. He said the savings calculation is the cost difference between the current 2009 premiums and the

Consortium 2010 premiums. The “true savings” is the difference between the increase or decrease associated with joining the Consortium and the increase associated with each employer’s current insured plan. The savings for the Consortium could be as much as 5% (approximately \$1,200,000), if the insurance premiums increased by 9% on average in 2010. Based on this analysis, the formation of the Consortium will increase premiums by approximately 4% in 2010.

Mr. Locey said they have developed reasonable rates based on the actual risk that exists so that the Consortium has a reasonable premium base to move forward with. He stated they are not presenting an artificially low number just to get municipalities to buy into the program. The goal of the Consortium is to gain efficiencies where possible and to establish stability in the premiums over the long-term.

Ms. Robertson asked how confident Mr. Locey is of the projected increases contained in the documents given the downturn in the economy. Mr. Locey said he is reasonably confident in the numbers and said health insurance doesn’t react as other services do with regard to the economy. He said the consortiums they are currently working with have experienced an average increase of 7-8%.

Mr. Locey said a meeting has been scheduled with the Teamsters for the purpose of discussing and forming a collaborative approach to solving the issues of those entities who have Teamsters. He stated although it is a competing interest they believe in the long-run those people would be better served in the Consortium.

Mr. Gilmore asked if it would be appropriate to show what dollars carry over and are going in as net equity after expenses. Mr. Locey said this information is available; he will update that document and provide to all members.

Mr. Locey updated members on the activities of the Health Benefits Steering Committee. He said the proposals for the Medical Plan Administrator (insurance company) were received last week and are being analyzed. He reported the quotes submitted are far below what was anticipated in the budget. The budget contained an estimate of \$44 per contract per month and quotes were received at \$30. He noted the local school consortium which is twice as large as this Consortium, will be paying \$31 per contract for administrative services.

He extended an offer to all municipalities to attend additional meetings to provide answers to any remaining questions.

**RESOLUTION NO. 001-09 - THE TOMPKINS COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS’
SUPPORT OF THE GREATER TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH
INSURANCE CONSORTIUM DEVELOPED WITH ASSISTANCE
OF A NEW YORK STATE SHARED MUNICIPAL SERVICES
PROGRAM GRANT**

MOVED by Mr. Barber, seconded by Ms. Robertson.

Ms. Thomas (T/Ulysses) expressed concern over the date of July 1 and suggested it be changed to August 1. Ms. Kippola said that change would be acceptable. It was requested by Ms. Sumner (T/Dryden), to amend the term “Health Care Consortium” to “Health Insurance Consortium”. Ms. Kippola stated the Consortium would cover other areas of health care in addition to health insurance, such as prescription drugs and wellness plans.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Sumner, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present to amend the term “Health Care Consortium” to “Health Insurance Consortium”. MOTION CARRIED.

It was MOVED by Ms. Nottke (V/Trumansburg), seconded by Mr. Gilmore (V/Cayuga Heights), and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to change the date on final resolved from July 1 to August 1.

A voice vote on the resolution as amended resulted as follows: Ayes – 16, Noes – 0.
RESOLUTION APPROVED.

WHEREAS, The Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG) comprises all the municipalities in Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Tompkins County, on behalf of TCCOG, accepted an incentive grant award under the New York State Shared Municipal Services Program, and

WHEREAS, the grant's purpose is to assist the municipalities in Tompkins County to create a municipal health Insurance consortium, and

WHEREAS, the Health Insurance Consortium will provide health benefits coverage for all participating municipalities with the intent to provide a net savings to the taxpayers of Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, TCCOG agrees that the agreement for creating the Greater Tompkins County Health Insurance Consortium is ready for municipalities to review, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That TCCOG endorses the planning for a Health Insurance Consortium and the resulting Municipal Cooperation Agreement,

RESOLVED further, That TCCOG recommends that each municipal board review the Greater Tompkins County Health Insurance Consortium agreement and vote to participate by August 1, 2009.

Natural Gas Drilling

Mr. Barber distributed information from Assemblywoman Lifton and announced a subcommittee will meet on June 17 at 3 p.m. He welcomed members to share information they have on this subject with TCCOG and the subcommittee.

Mr. Whicher said he spoke with the EMC Subcommittee on Marcellus Shale drilling and has been asked to coordinate the sharing of information. He said while there are many efforts underway that pertain to this subject, there needs to be better organization. Mr. Barber said Assemblywoman Lifton has requested that the comment period on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement be extended up to 90 days. He suggested that each municipal board pass resolutions urging this comment period be extended as well.

Mr. Barber opened discussion on process questions.

Ms. Robertson reported on a story on NPR yesterday in which it was reported a Congresswoman from Colorado is preparing legislation to repeal the exemption of gas drilling from the Safe Drinking Water Act. She suggested this is something Tompkins County's representatives could do as well. Mr. Barber said Congressman Hinchey is involved in this as a co-sponsor.

Mr. Gilmore said up until April 1 the Village of Cayuga Heights was taking water from the Trenton Black River (not the Marcellus Shale). Although that business represented five percent of the Village's revenue, this was stopped. They are moving forward with analysis before considering to resume accepting water from that source.

Cell Tower Communication Committee

Ms. Robertson reported a group met (Ms. Peterson, Mr. Engman, Ms. Sumner, and Dan Hoffman) to discuss an interest that was expressed previously in regard to seeing if municipalities could

collaborate in a planning process. She said although the County does not have land use authority, it does have interest in colocation opportunities on the Public Safety Communications Towers. The County's attorneys have advised the County cannot participate financially in the process because it has no legal authority to make decisions; therefore, the service the County can provide would be in the areas of support and information.

Ms. Robertson said the Planning Department put together a Countywide map and spreadsheet that includes information that has been received from municipal code officers and various other sources and. She distributed the documents, which are is a compilation of information as of 2001. She suggested that this information be updated by municipalities. Ms. Robertson said there are municipalities that currently have applications from Verizon and other companies and there is the potential that coordinated efforts could avoid the construction of an excessive number of cell towers in multiple places around the County. Ms. Robertson said when the Public Safety Communications System was constructed there was a lot of interest expressed in co-location ofn the towers; however, technology has changed since that time and that interest no longer exists. The goal of the cell companies seems to be to cover the urban areas of the county more intensively; perhaps in future years they will be more interested in the rural sites where the county's towers are. She said if there is a collaborative planning process there might be a greater interest. Tthere is a file of all existing ordinances, and if municipalities joined together there may be interest in to hiring legal and engineering services, one task could be to review these ordinances. Ms. Peterson said there may also be interest in developing a comprehensive approach so that it doesn't create situations where one municipality is pitted against another.

Mr. Engman noted the group that has been meeting is exploring ways to co-locate which they believe cell companies would like because they would know where they could co-locate without getting bogged down ininto the approval process and having to go through planning boards.. He suggested the attorney examine the possibility of an expedited review process for those companies that agree to co-locate on an identified site. He noted this being viewed as a very positive process. Ms. Robertson added that municipalities are interested in getting more comprehensive coverage where there is none now, and would like to facilitate such expansion.

Animal Control

Mr. Barber briefly updated on dog control and a meeting held today. He provided a history, stating that a few years ago the SPCA came to municipalities with an ultimatum that they were going to double rates for two years in a row. Since that time they have changed their position and have now created two entities – the SPCA which has its own mission in helping animals, and Tompkins County Animal Control – the entity that can ticket an individual for not having a dog license. They are working on many things, including working with Cornell. Cornell has been looking for a place for the Vet students to do spaying and neutering and perform other services. An MOU has been created between between the SPCA and Cornell to create a facility. They are looking for grants and other funding possibilities that would help them get to the point where they can do this. The SPCA has come back to municipalities that working with them and have stated they will maintain 2009 rates in 2010. The subcommittee will meet again next month and would like to know if any municipalities have any intention of discontinuing their contract with the SPCA in 2010, as well as any municipalities that may be considering working with the SPCA in 2010.

Mr. Dietrich said each town is supposed to have an emergency management plan that outlines what will happen with animals in the event an owner is incapacitated. This has not been addressed by municipalities but is being addressed through this effort.

Mr. Engman said the construction of an animal hospital by Cornell and the SPCA at the SPCA location would be provide a tremendous connection with quality services. Mr. Barber said they are

looking into a shared services grant that would support a census of dogs in the County. The next meeting will be June 24 at 10:30 a.m. at City Hall; Mr. Barber will update TCCOG on funding as this moves forward.

Stimulus Funding

Dan Lamb, representative from Congressman Hinchey's Office, updated TCCOG on the Stimulus Plan. He said yesterday marked the 100th day of the unprecedented undertaking by the Federal government. Approximately \$1 billion per day of the Stimulus funding is being invested. At this time \$31 billion has been disbursed. The program is moving forward very well and has a number of "whistle-blower" protections to make sure the funds are being spent wisely. He spoke of Tompkins County and said things are going very well and encouraged everyone to participate and be aware of smaller grant programs that may be available. Mr. Lamb said he is available in any way possible and would like feedback on how things are going. Speaking of the economy, Mr. Lamb said these are times that haven't been experienced in a very long time, however, consumer confidence is up right now and he believes things are beginning to turn around. Mr. Lamb said Social Security recipients and Vets have received checks for \$250, and 95% of the working class are seeing an increase in take-home pay.

Mr. Engman said although the Town of Ithaca has not received any Stimulus funding, it has benefited because it freed up monies in the system from those who did. He complimented the County on the coordination it has done on this. Mr. Lamb also praised the County's coordination efforts.

There was discussion of specific areas Stimulus funding is being targeted. Mr. Lamb spoke of the importance of all individuals to have access to the internet and reported broadband funding has increased from \$15 million to \$6 billion. There is generous funding for low income programs (eligibility is up to the rate of 200% of poverty), such as weatherization, energy efficiency for homes through Tompkins Community Action (TCA). Ms. Sumner commented that TCA and Cooperative Extension are doing wonderful work with energy-saving funding.

Other areas discussed included the Lockheed Martin Air Force One contract in Owego and saving jobs. Mr. Lamb said Lockheed Martin has done everything it was supposed to do; regulations in the process were changed by the Department of Defense that resulted in the price increasing. He said last week the President signed into law a bill that was passed by the House and Senate to reform the procurement process.

Ms. Robertson asked what is available and what should small businesses be looking for. Mr. Lamb said HUD funding is good for everyone, particularly small businesses. Ms. Robertson noted another big source of funding youth up to age 24 is job money for this summer. Ms. Younger said there is also a lot of funding for workers who have been laid off, COFA, DSS Foster Care and Medicaid.

Next agenda

The following items were suggested for inclusion on the next agenda:

- SMSI
- Animal Control
- Natural Gas Drilling

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Tompkins County Council of Governments
May 28, 2009

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office