

Chairman's video comments April 18, 2022

Description:

Chairman Weatherup reports on several resolutions passed during the Legislature's April meeting, including partial property tax exemptions and grant funding. He also talks about two outside investigations regarding DSS. He provides a COVID-19 brief, announces the first "History on Tap" event of 2022, and encourages residents to celebrate Earth Day by keeping our natural resources pristine. The "Tourism Tip" is to get out and explore those natural wonders!

As today's video does not include a translator, the video script is available for viewing here:

Good afternoon. I'm Jim Weatherup, chairman of the Oswego County Legislature. Our April Legislature meeting was another productive session.

We passed two resolutions to raise the qualifying income limits for partial property tax exemptions for both low-income homeowners aged 65 and over, and for low-income households for qualified people with disabilities.

Raising the income ceiling and updating the sliding income scale allows more households to be eligible for a partial exemption. The sliding income scale will begin at \$29,000 or less for a 50% exemption and go to the maximum \$37,400 for a 5% exemption.

These changes will take effect next year. Qualified households need to apply by March 1, 2023 to see the change on their assessment rolls beginning July 1. When county tax bills come out the following January, they will then reflect the exemption.

Another resolution passed at the April Legislature meeting will allow the County to apply for a \$1 million grant through the New York State Office of Homes and Community Renewal to provide safe and decent housing for farm workers across the county. Grant funding is available through the CARES Act of 2020 and the Oswego County Farm Bureau has identified interest from several local farm owners.

We also set a public hearing for a proposed amendment to a local law that will permit and regulate all-terrain vehicle (ATV) operation on certain portions of selected county roads.

Opening these roads is necessary for ATVs to access and connect to the trail networks. It promotes recreational opportunities that will help stimulate the local economy and offer enjoyment to residents and tourists traveling in the area.

The public hearing will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 12 in the Legislative Chambers of the Legislative Office Building, 46 E. Bridge St., Oswego.

The Oswego County Agricultural District added six more properties this year; four in the town of Mexico, one in the town of Amboy and one in the town of Schroepfel.

We also recognized April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child” takes on a whole new level of importance with the extra attention focused on this topic in recent weeks.

We held a series of special meetings in the last month to discuss the tragic loss of Jordan Brooks and call for a plan of action following the arrest of his parents for their role in his death.

On Friday, April 1, we passed resolutions authorizing independent investigations by attorney Scott Iseman of Saratoga Springs, N.Y. and the Bonadio Group of Syracuse, N.Y.

Once the criminal proceedings are concluded, attorney Iseman will investigate the facts and circumstances regarding the response and handling of all reports about Jordan’s case by our Department of Social Services.

The Bonadio Group – which is familiar with NYS Social Services Law and NYS Office of Children and Family Services regulations – will conduct a review of DSS to identify its response actions, trends, strengths and weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

Moving forward, we will let these investigations show us the facts, which will help determine our next steps.

In other County news, we continue to see COVID-19 case counts rise. Last week, we reported 891 new positive cases, and 14 new hospitalizations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our COVID-19 community level remains “high” for the third straight week, so we must remain vigilant.

Our health department continues to incorporate COVID-19 vaccines into its regular immunization clinic schedule at the Nick Sterio Public Health Clinic in Oswego. Go to the health department’s COVID-19 website and click on the “vaccines and boosters” link for details. (https://health.oswegocounty.com/information/2019_novel_coronavirus/covid-19_vaccine.php)

Also, mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 4 for the first “History on Tap” event of 2022, presented by the Fort Ontario State Historic Site. This event opens at 7 p.m. at G. S. Steamer’s in Oswego and will focus on gathering ideas and interest from the public in celebrating our country’s 250th anniversary. Admission is free.

Get out and celebrate Earth Day coming up on Friday, April 22. Whether it’s for the day, the month, or all year-long, let’s work together to keep our natural resources pristine – for our own recreation and for other’s enjoyment, too.

This month’s “Tourism Tip” is to explore the nature trails in your backyard. Go to: visit oswego county dot com to find trail maps and more information. (www.visitoswegocounty.com)

Stay safe and healthy; and thank you for doing your part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If you haven’t been vaccinated, and wish to do so, call the COVID-19 Hotline at 315-349-

3330 – or call your medical provider – for more information. Enjoy the upcoming spring weather and look for our next video update on Monday, May 16.