

NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

March S. Gallagher, Esq.
Comptroller



Charles Dinstuhl, CPA
Deputy Comptroller

For release: Immediately
Contact Dafne Normann 845-331-8774

Ulster County 2024 Tax Auction Records High Proceeds, But Sees Lower Gain as Surplus is Returned to Former Owners Under Changing Legal Landscape

Kingston, NY (July 21, 2025)- Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher released the *Delinquent Real Property Tax Auction Report* today. The report focuses on the last auction held in the fall of 2024 and notes that there will not be a tax auction in 2025 as the County works to implement changes in state law covering tax auctions.

Over the last two years, the County has made significant changes to its tax foreclosure and auction process by moving to online auctions, changing the auctioneer and software platforms, enforcing taxes for the Villages of Ellenville and Saugerties going forward, and implementing a legal change to the way auction proceeds are to be handled.

The 2024 auction, the second held online, brought in \$6.6 million in proceeds. That amount likely reflects the absence of a 2023 auction, which led to more properties being included. Despite the record proceeds, the immediate gain for the County was only \$420,095 as new rules govern the return of surplus to property owners under the 2023 Supreme Court decision in *Tyler v. Hennepin County*.

Under these new rules the County now notifies property owners of any surplus achieved in the sale of their property. Surplus is the sale price minus the back taxes, interest, penalties, and administrative costs associated with the sale of a property. Property owners have three years to request their surplus. If they do not request the surplus, those funds become funds of the County.

The report also highlights the County's progress in significantly reducing the amount of hazardous uncollectible properties since the Comptroller's Review of [701 Grant Avenue](#), a property which had accumulated over \$10 million in back taxes, interest and penalties without being auctioned because of the stigma of contamination. That property has now been sold returning \$3.7 million to taxpayers.

Overall, the County has reduced the value of hazardous, uncollectible parcels from a high of \$21.7 million in 2020 to just \$1.2 million in 2024. Properties that are delinquent and are not taken in foreclosure and sold at auction continue to accrue school taxes, for which the County taxpayers

are required to make school districts whole. This means that every year a property sits idle, local taxpayers foot the bill.

To address this burden, the County has contracted with several engineering firms to review and prepare properties with potential contamination for auction, bringing returns for taxpayers. For example, the Comptroller's report identified a property at 11 Tow Path Road in Accord, that had accumulated \$182,563 in back taxes since 2011 but had not been auctioned. During that time, the County taxpayers had paid \$74,191.04 in school taxes. The property was sold in the 2024 auction for \$452,000.

"The County has made notable progress in modernizing the delinquent property auction process and addressing potentially hazardous uncollectible properties," said Comptroller March Gallagher. "But we urge the County to continue to review those properties that have languished with years of delinquency with no foreclosure or sale and move them to auction as quickly as possible. Moving these properties to auction helps relieve the taxpayer burden and improves our communities."

###