

# MEMORANDUM FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER



March S. Gallagher, Esq.  
Comptroller

Alicia DeMarco, CPA  
Deputy Comptroller

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Periodic Compensation Review Committee

FROM: Comptroller March Gallagher

RE: Elected Official Salary Review

DATE: January 12, 2022

The Office of the Comptroller routinely reviews budgetary information from neighboring similar counties. We have assembled salary information that we hope will assist in your work. Our analysis demonstrates that the salaries for Ulster County elected officials are not competitive with surrounding counties, nor have they kept pace with normal cost-of-living increases as demonstrated below and attached as a separate spreadsheet. It is important to note that the County Court Judge and District Attorney position salaries are both set by state law, and the County Court Judge's salary is paid by the Office of Court Administration.

Failure to raise salaries commensurate with cost-of-living adjustments has resulted in a variety of management issues within departments, including significant salary compression issues for some offices. Competent candidates may be dissuaded from running for elected office because the salary is not competitive even within its own organization. Waiting a decade or more to raise salaries results in larger necessary increases which are harder to absorb. Fortunately, Ulster County closed 2020 with a \$11.6 million surplus adding to fund balance and will close out 2021 with a large surplus as well making it an appropriate time to adjust these salaries so that future Periodic Compensation Review Committees and Legislatures are not trying to make up the difference in lean budget cycles.

- 1) Countywide elected Executive, Clerk, Sheriff, and Comptroller positions have not had an increase since 2009, the inception of the Charter form of government. Moreover, the Clerk's salary has been stagnant since 2005. Legislative elected positions received a single increase in 2016.

Ulster County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Legislator (Chair)	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$19,500	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500	\$23,500
Legislator (Min/Maj)	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Legislator	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000
Executive	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,060	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,572	\$133,570	\$133,572	\$133,572
Comptroller	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,319	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,714	\$101,709	\$101,709
Clerk	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,319	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,709	\$101,714	\$101,709	\$101,709
Sheriff	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,317	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,706	\$101,719	\$101,727	\$101,727
DA*	\$131,398	\$131,398	\$131,404	\$131,398	\$160,600	\$167,300	\$167,298	\$167,298	\$183,492	\$184,198	\$200,002	\$202,804	\$202,797	\$202,797

- 2) Ulster County union and management positions have received several increases over the last 13 years, including recent increases that impact the 2022 budget. If countywide elected positions had been given increases comparable to the rest of management staff, salaries would be significantly higher, demonstrated in the following chart. Sheriff, Clerk, and Comptroller would be at \$117,980 and County Executive would be at \$154,940.

Salaries if Electeds Had Received Management Increases						
Year	%	Clerk/Sheriff / Comptroller	County Executive	Leg. Chair	Leg Maj. /Min.	Legislator
01/01/2009	-	\$ 101,709	\$133,572	\$ 19,500	\$ 12,000	\$ 10,000
01/01/2014	2.0%	\$ 103,743	\$136,243	\$ 19,890	\$ 12,240	\$ 10,200
01/01/2015	2.0%	\$ 105,818	\$138,968	\$ 20,288	\$ 12,485	\$ 10,404
01/01/2016	2.0%	\$ 107,929	\$141,741	\$ 20,693	\$ 12,734	\$ 10,612
01/01/2018	2.0%	\$ 110,095	\$144,585	\$ 21,108	\$ 12,989	\$ 10,825
01/01/2019	2.0%	\$ 112,297	\$147,478	\$ 21,530	\$ 13,249	\$ 11,041
01/01/2020	2.0%	\$ 114,543	\$150,427	\$ 21,961	\$ 13,514	\$ 11,262
01/01/2022	3.0%	\$ 117,980	\$154,940	\$ 22,619	\$ 13,920	\$ 11,600
Current		\$ 101,709	\$133,572	\$ 23,500	\$ 16,000	\$ 14,000
Difference		\$ 16,271	\$ 21,368	\$ (881)	\$ (2,080)	\$ (2,400)

- 3) Countywide elected officials earn substantially less than their nearby county counterparts in Dutchess, Orange, Greene, and Albany Counties.

2022 Budget	Ulster	Dutchess	Albany*	Orange	Greene
Legislator (Chair)	\$ 23,500	\$ 34,967	\$ 41,053	53,659	\$ 21,752
Legislator (Min/Maj)	\$ 16,000	\$ 25,133	\$ 29,276	39,351	\$ 16,000
Legislator	\$ 14,000	\$ 16,391	\$ 25,037	\$34,239	\$ 15,000
Executive	\$ 133,572	\$ 152,839	\$ 155,679	186,276	\$ 159,979
Comptroller	\$ 101,709	\$ 109,204	\$ 128,332	\$133,900	\$ 108,855
Clerk	\$ 101,709	\$ 115,854	\$ 119,041	116,262	\$ 101,070
Sheriff	\$ 101,727	\$ 137,316	\$ 142,501	167,769	\$ 100,500
DA*	\$ 202,797	\$ 200,401	\$ 202,800	\$212,160	\$ 197,000

no comptroller, salary presented is Finance Commissioner  
no comptroller, salary presented is Treasurer  
no executive, salary presented is for County Administrator  
includes additional salary from NYS as Commissioner of Jurors

- 4) Lack of increases to elected salaries is causing unworkable salary compression issues in the Sheriff's Office where current Sheriff's deputies and the Undersheriff earn substantially more than the elected Sheriff who is responsible for their oversight. Furthermore, the lower salaries in the Clerk and Comptroller's Office create downward pressure in the management positions in those offices, where the difference between the elected Clerk and Comptroller and their deputies appears substantial but results in uncompetitive management salaries potentially impairing recruitment of qualified staff.

	2021	2022
<b>Deputy County Execs</b>	\$126,374	\$ 129,675
	\$126,374	\$ 129,675
	\$126,374	\$ 129,675
<b>Deputy Comptroller</b>	\$84,466	\$ 86,853
<b>Deputy Clerk</b>	\$84,408	\$ 98,987
<b>Sheriff's Road Patrol</b>	\$105,945	\$ 114,234
<b>Undersheriff</b>	\$113,232	\$ 114,008
<b>Sheriff's Warden</b>	\$105,903	\$ 111,009

- 5) The Sheriff's salary is substantially less than other municipal law enforcement municipal officials in Ulster County. As a result, a serious impact to consider is that top law enforcement officials might not seek to run for the Office of Sheriff because they earn more in their current positions.

Position	Size of Force	2021
Ulster County Sheriff	285 members	\$ 101,727
City of Kingston Chief	80 members	\$ 158,059
Town of Ulster PD	24 members	\$ 119,799
Town of New Paltz	20 members	\$ 112,020
Town of Saugerties	22members	\$ 109,836
State Police Zone 3 Commander	125 members	\$ 159,900

- 6) Countywide elected officials have salaries lower than other department heads. The County Executive earns less than the District Attorney and Health Commissioner. The Sheriff, Clerk, and Comptroller earn less than the DA, Health Commissioner, DSS Commissioner, County Attorney, Director of Finance, Director of Planning, Director of Information Services, and the Commissioner of Public Works. The newly created Director of Innovation and Budget will earn \$114,000 in the 2022 budget, more than the Sheriff, Clerk or Comptroller.

Department	2021
<b>DA*</b>	\$ 202,797
<b>DOH</b>	\$ 168,943
<b>Executive</b>	\$ 133,572
<b>DSS</b>	\$ 128,349
<b>County Attorney</b>	\$ 120,454
<b>Finance</b>	\$ 120,454
<b>Planning</b>	\$ 114,973
<b>IS</b>	\$ 111,849
<b>DPW</b>	\$ 106,715
<b>Sheriff</b>	\$ 101,727
<b>Comptroller</b>	\$ 101,709
<b>Clerk</b>	\$ 101,709

- 7) The employee share of health insurance costs, which is now 20% for all elected officials sworn after 1/1/2020, has resulted in a net pay cut for the Ulster County Clerk, Sheriff, County Executive, and any County Legislator elected prior to January 1, 2020, all of whom started their employment at a lower employee share. Other surrounding counties have similar or lower employee shares for health insurance effectively widening the wage gap between Ulster’s elected officials and those of other counties.

<b>Heath Insurance Elected % Contribution</b>	
<b>Ulster</b>	20%
<b>Dutchess</b>	15%
<b>Albany</b>	Not available at this time
<b>Orange</b>	12%
<b>Greene</b>	20% for hires after 1/1/2013, 15% prior

I appreciate the opportunity to share this important information with the Committee and will supplement this memo and spreadsheet if additional information becomes available, such as Albany County’s health insurance rate, budgeted 2022 elected salaries, and budgeted 2022 salaries from Ulster County municipal law enforcement agencies. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there are any questions regarding these materials.