

# NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

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## **Comptroller March Gallagher Brings Legal Action to Obtain Documents Pertaining to Former Finance Commissioner Burt Gulnick**

Kingston, NY (October 19, 2023) – Yesterday the Ulster County Comptroller filed a special proceeding in Supreme Court to compel the release of books and records pertaining to former Commissioner of Finance Burt Gulnick.

In April of 2021 the Comptroller's Office received tips from concerned citizens about Mr. Gulnick's personal debt and potential involvement in time theft. As a result, the Comptroller documented these concerns and shared them with the former Administration, which then instituted an investigation through the County's outside labor counsel. County Comptroller Gallagher has sought the results of that investigation since the fall of 2021.

Additionally, documentation now publicly available through civil litigation against Ulster County and Mr. Gulnick indicates that the County's corporate compliance hotline received at least one call on the same issues brought forward by the Comptroller. The 2021 investigation and corporate compliance documents are necessary for the Comptroller to protect taxpayers from waste, fraud, and abuse by ensuring appropriate internal controls are in place.

Accordingly, on September 18<sup>th</sup> the Comptroller subpoenaed the corporate compliance hotline and investigation documentation. The return date on the subpoena was September 23, 2023. The Administration failed to provide the requested documents by the return date taking the position that they do not need to comply with the subpoena.

The Ulster County Charter § C-57(A) gives the Ulster County Comptroller access to all books and records of the county at any time, except where precluded by law. The documents requested by the Comptroller are books and records of the County, the Comptroller's access is not precluded by law, and the Comptroller is moving to enforce the subpoena accordingly.

"These documents are necessary to carry out my Charter mandated responsibilities to the taxpayers of Ulster County," said Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher. "Given Mr. Gulnick's pleading guilty to grand larceny charges last week, I am extremely disappointed that my access to these books and records is being denied. The ongoing investigation by the Office of State Comptroller into Ulster County's finances does not override my local authority and responsibility to ensure that taxpayer funds are protected. Litigation uses valuable taxpayer resources. It is my job to protect those resources and to ensure transparency and oversight throughout the process."

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