



**NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
ULSTER COUNTY COMPTROLLER**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**County Comptroller Calls for Examination of Salary Shifting  
Homebound Employees Unable to Work to Unemployment**

Kingston, NY (April 28, 2020) – Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher urged County Executive Patrick Ryan and Legislative Chairman David Donaldson to examine whether Ulster County should discontinue employment for certain employees as a result of anticipated sales tax and state aid revenue shortfalls of potentially more than \$34 million.

“No elected official ever wants to call for potential layoffs, but in this case, as the County’s fiscal watchdog, it would be a dereliction of duty to not to identify this potential savings for Ulster County,” said Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher. “Ulster County can shift the cost of certain employees’ salaries to state and federal unemployment at no financial detriment to the employees while reducing Ulster County’s expected budget shortfalls by millions of dollars.”

The New York on PAUSE Order imposed maximum 50 percent staffing density requirements on local governments to enable employee social distancing. Comptroller Gallagher’s memorandum of cost savings from the shift identifies 49,000 hours of county employee time that has been paid to employees for hours they could not work due to these mandated density requirements. The memorandum identifies that \$1,287,961 in salary has already been paid for hours unworked since the Order went into effect.

Counties across the state are facing fiscal uncertainty as local revenues and state aid are expected to precipitously decline. Other New York counties including Sullivan, Franklin and Schuyler Counties have already laid off employees to forestall fiscal cliffs. Schuyler County is keeping employees on health insurance and accruing time which Comptroller Gallagher strongly recommends investigating.

The memorandum also notes that by shifting costs now through July 31, 2020, for employees currently earning less than \$62,150, employees will receive more on Unemployment Insurance while they can claim the added federal benefit of Pandemic Unemployment Insurance Compensation saving Ulster County between \$1.5 and \$3 million for an 8 week period.

“Salary shifting to state and federal budgets through July 31<sup>st</sup> will help Ulster County meet its budget obligations throughout the rest of the year,” noted Comptroller Gallagher. “My recommendation today acknowledges and takes into account that Ulster County residents will need increasing county services for economic, social and public health services as a result of the COVID Pandemic.”

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Memorandum Attached