

NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

March S. Gallagher, Esq.
Comptroller



Charles Dinstuhl, CPA
Deputy Comptroller

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

Comptroller Releases Audit of the License Agreement of Ulster County Fairgrounds to the Ulster County Agricultural Society

Kingston, NY (September 12, 2025) – The Ulster County Comptroller’s Office today released an audit of the County’s license agreement with the Ulster County Agricultural Society (UCAS), the nonprofit organization that operates the County Fairgrounds in New Paltz.

The UCAS has managed the annual Ulster County Fair and overseen Fairgrounds operations for more than a century. The Fairgrounds remain a valuable public asset, drawing visitors from across the region and hosting events that generate both economic activity and community engagement. The current license agreement runs from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2025.

The audit found that while UCAS generally met its annual capital investment obligations, it failed to consistently provide several required deliverables, including monthly activity reports and timely financial statements. It also found that the County has not consistently enforced several oversight provisions or tracked in-kind contributions, limiting the ability to fully assess the public return on investment.

“The Fairgrounds are an important community resource, and this audit highlights opportunities for both the Agricultural Society and Ulster County to improve accountability and transparency,” said Comptroller March Gallagher. “As we prepare for a new agreement, our goal is to ensure that taxpayer investments are protected and that future contracts better reflect the County’s priorities.”

In its management response, the Ulster County Department of Public Works, which plays a key role in managing the agreement, agreed with the audit findings and outlined corrective action. DPW commits to centralizing oversight through a single point of contact, requiring multi-year capital improvement planning, and incorporating stronger reporting requirements into a modernized agreement anticipated to take effect on January 1, 2026.

While DPW’s response focused on oversight and planning improvements, the audit also recommends exploring longer-term lease options to better support major infrastructure investments while maintaining County ownership and control.

The full audit is available at: comptroller.ulstercountyny.gov

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