

**Establishing A Policy To Fund, Facilitate, Perpetuate And Support The Augmentation And Operation Of Local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) In and For The County Of Ulster**

Referred to: The Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee (Chairwoman Hansut and Legislators Clinton, Hewitt, Levine, Maloney, McCollough and Walls), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Collins, Hansut, Kovacs, Nolan, Roberts, and Uchitelle)

Legislator Jason J. Kovacs offers the following:

WHEREAS, the provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a critical public service essential to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of Ulster County residents; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County's Towns and the City of Kingston face increasing operational costs in maintaining reliable EMS services, including personnel, training, equipment, and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature recognizes the need to provide financial support to assist Town governments and the City of Kingston in meeting these essential public safety responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the findings and recommendations outlined in the EMS Services Delivery Report for Ulster County, New York, dated March 26, 2024, prepared by the Center for Public Safety Management, LLC, emphasize the critical need for increased EMS funding and support to address staffing shortages, equipment needs, and operational challenges across the County; and

WHEREAS, upon closing of the 2023 financials, Ulster County ended with an unrestricted fund balance of over \$102 million, or 27% of total General Fund expenditures and operating transfers out; and

~~WHEREAS, a surplus is anticipated for the year ended December 31, 2024; and~~

~~WHEREAS, Ulster County's adopted Fund Balance Policy requires the unrestricted fund balance within the General Fund to be between 15% and 20% of current General Fund operating expenditures; and~~

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Comptroller's ~~released a report on or about~~ **dated** October 31, 2024 ~~finding~~ **found** that "at the close of 2023, the County was \$31.1 million over the fund balance threshold for the General Fund based on limits established by the Ulster County Legislature"; and that over "the past three years, the County's operating surplus was \$136.4 million higher than planned"; and

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**WHEREAS, Ulster County's adopted Fund Balance Policy requires the unrestricted fund balance within the General Fund to remain between 15% and 20% of current General Fund operating expenditures; and**

**WHEREAS, the 2025-26 New York State Budget has proposed declaring Emergency Medical Services as an essential service, resulting in the establishment of Countywide taxing districts; and**

**WHEREAS, if enacted, such changes would result in the need for additional modifications to the provision of EMS services throughout the County and this plan; and**

**WHEREAS, in Ulster County approximately 65% of calls are dispatched as Advanced Life Support; and**

**WHEREAS, Emergency Medical Service agencies have identified gaps in funding due to the cost of readiness; and**

**WHEREAS, core anchor agencies have allegedly been providing Advanced Life Support services in their approved operating territory within the 95% of call response rate; and**

**WHEREAS, several agencies provide effective Basic Life Support services within the 95% call response rate with the provision of mutual aid;**

**WHEREAS, in order to support Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Services it is necessary to support the cost of readiness and to support the effective provision of Emergency Medical Services, herein defined at meeting the 95% call response rate; and**

**WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature finds it necessary and appropriate to allocate a portion of the unrestricted fund balance to support local EMS services in the County's municipalities; and**

**WHEREAS, it is appropriate from a public safety, fiscal management and budget operations perspective to maintain ongoing funding to support local EMS-related services, operations and programs; and**

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WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature, pursuant to Ulster County Charter §C-11, is the legislative, appropriating and policy-determining body of the County; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, that the 2025 Ulster County Operating Budget is hereby amended as follows:**

	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>AA.9900.9900-3700.9990 (Rev.#)</b>	<b>Appropriated Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$4,532,000.00</b>
<b>AA.3020.1801-4300.4505 (App.#),</b>	<b>Professional Services Other</b>	<b>\$4,532,000.00</b>

**and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, that the above-listed fund appropriation shall be allocated as follows: \$2,000,000 to be allocated to the towns and the City of Kingston for municipal-level EMS services; and \$2,532,000 to be allocated to nonprofit Advanced Life Support (ALS) agencies operating within Ulster County, to be distributed by the Department of Emergency Services based on operational needs, coverage gaps, call volume, and provider capacity; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature recognizes the critical role of Basic Life Support (BLS) agencies in delivering timely and essential emergency care throughout the County; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, that BLS agencies may be considered eligible to receive funding under this policy through either: the \$2,000,000 allocation to towns and the City of Kingston, or the \$2,532,000 allocation to nonprofit ALS agencies, provided that the BLS agency operates under contract with a municipality or delivers services aligned with regional EMS planning efforts, and subject to approval by the Ulster County Department of Emergency Services based on need, service area coverage, and conformance with EMS protocols and standards; and, be it further**

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**RESOLVED**, that the \$2,000,000 allocation to towns and the City of Kingston shall be distributed annually based on the following formula: One-third (1/3) based on each municipality's proportion of the County's total population, as determined by the most recent decennial U.S. Census; One-third (1/3) based on each municipality's proportion of the total assessed property value in Ulster County; One-third (1/3) based on each municipality's proportion of total EMS call volume; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, that prior to the disbursement of any funding to a town, its ambulance district, or a third-party EMS provider contracted by a town, the town shall submit a written plan for the use of the funds to the Director of Emergency Management, who shall have sole discretion to approve or deny the plan based on its compliance with Ulster County Department of Emergency Services operational standards and public safety objectives; and, be it further

~~RESOLVED~~, that it is the Policy of Ulster County to fund, facilitate, perpetuate and support the augmentation and operation of local emergency medical services (EMS) in and for the County of Ulster in an amount not to exceed five million dollars per annum; and, be it further

~~RESOLVED~~, that in furtherance of this Policy, Ulster County shall offer an annual appropriation to fund the County's Towns and the City of Kingston for the administration of local Emergency Medical Services which shall be allocated annually according to a formula allocating 50% of the funds based on each Town's and the City's proportional population as determined by the most recent decennial U.S. Census, and 50% based on the Town's and the City's proportional total assessed property value as reported by the Ulster County Department of Finance; and, be it further

~~RESOLVED~~, that the County of Ulster shall implement this Policy commencing in fiscal year 2025 and continue the same from year to year provided that sufficient unassigned funds exist in a given fiscal year; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, that this Policy shall require as a predicate to the disbursement of any funds to a Town or the City of Kingston a contract or intermunicipal agreement in a form approved by the County Attorney and Legislative Counsel; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that any ~~such~~ contract or intermunicipal agreement ~~in furtherance of this Policy~~ shall ~~require~~ **include clear restrictions that all the funds** disbursed **funds** be used solely for ~~such~~ EMS-related expenses, including but not limited to staffing, training, equipment procurement, and operational costs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that any ~~such~~ contract or intermunicipal agreement ~~in furtherance of this Policy~~ shall ~~contain procedures for Towns and the City of Kingston to document the use of these funds to ensure accountability and transparency, including but not limited to the requirement that the participating Towns and the City of Kingston~~ **all towns and nonprofit ALS or BLS recipients receiving funding pursuant to this resolution** shall submit an annual report to the Clerk of the Legislature ~~for distribution to members of the Ulster County Legislature~~ detailing the use of funds and the impact on EMS services **delivery, which shall be distributed to the members of the Ulster County Legislature;** and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this policy shall take effect in fiscal year 2025 and continue in subsequent years, subject to the availability of unassigned fund balance, and that the total annual appropriation for EMS-related services may be reviewed and adjusted by resolution of this Legislature; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that all funds disbursed under this policy shall be used solely for EMS-related expenses, including but not limited to staffing, training, equipment procurement, and operational costs, and that all municipalities receiving funds shall be subject to an independent financial audit annually to ensure compliance; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that any town or the City of Kingston found to have used funds for purposes other than EMS-related expenses shall be required to repay the misused funds in full and may be deemed ineligible for future allocations under this policy for a period of up to three years; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that continued funding for any given municipality shall be contingent upon demonstrated improvements in EMS response times, staffing levels, or service availability, as determined by an annual evaluation conducted by the Ulster County Department of Emergency Services; and, be it further

RESOLVED, if Federal funding for County year 2025 and or 2026 is reduced to below 90% of budgeted anticipated revenues for the respective fiscal year the County shall evaluate the continuance of this program,

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and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Postponed in Committee: Law Enforcement and Public Safety on March 5, 2025  
without consent

Postponed in Committee: Law Enforcement and Public Safety on April 2, 2025 with  
consent

Passed Committee: Law Enforcement and Public Safety on \_\_\_\_\_.

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on \_\_\_\_\_.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

~~\$5,000,000.00~~ – ADDITIONAL 2025 FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATION

**\$4,532,000.00**

~~\$5,000,000.00~~ – ADDITIONAL 2025 APPROPRIATION DOLLARS

**\$4,532,000.00**