

# Audit Committee

## Regular Meeting Minutes

**DATE & TIME:** March 29, 2022 – 6:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** Powered by Zoom Meeting by dialing 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID 880 5891 8701  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Tracey A. Bartels, Chair  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Amber Feaster  
**PRESENT:** Legislators John Gavaris, Craig Lopez, and Eve Walter; Comptroller March Gallagher; and Deputy County Executive Marc Rider  
**ABSENT:** Legislator Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr.  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes  
**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Legislators Phil Erner, and Joseph Maloney; Deputy Comptroller Alicia DeMarco; Sam Sonnenberg, Office of the Comptroller

- Chair Bartels called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM and called the roll.

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### Motion No. 1: To approve the Minutes and Transcripts of the September 23, 2021 Regular Meeting

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Walter  
**Discussion:** None  
**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Bartels, Ronk, Gavaris, Lopez, and Walter  
**Voting Against:** None  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 4  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Approved

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See transcript attached.

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**New Business:** None

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**Old Business:** None

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Chair Bartels asked the members if there was any other business, and hearing none;

## **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Walter  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 4  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Time:** 7:41 pm

**Respectfully submitted:** Amber Feaster  
**Minutes Approved:** June 8, 2022

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**Chair Bartels:** All right, we have, we have a quorum, so I am going to call the meeting to order. Amber, do you mind taking attendance?

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Sure. Bartels.

**Chair Bartels:** Here.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Ronk. Gavaris. Here.

**Legislator Gavaris:** Present.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Lopez.

**Legislator Lopez:** Here.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** Here.

**Chair Bartels:** Great. Thank you. And we also have with us Comptroller Gallagher, who's an ex-officio member, non, non-voting but appreciate your attending, and Deputy Executive Rider, also ex-officio, representing the Executive's Office. Thank you both for being here and participating. Years past we've had the participation of both offices, again, non-voting members per the charter, but we're happy you're here. Hopefully everyone's had the chance to look at the minutes and the transcript from the September 23rd 2021 meeting. I'll entertain a motion for discussion.

**Legislator Walter:** I'll move it.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay. I think, Legislator Gavaris, your, your mic isn't working well.

**Chairman Gavaris:** Can you hear me?

**Chair Bartels:** Now. We can. Yes. So, Legislator Gavaris moved it and Legislator Walter we'll take that as a second, if that's okay. Is there any discussion? Okay, all those in favor of accepting them as presented.

**Group:** Aye.

**Chair Bartels:** Opposed. Okay. Passes unanimously. Next, we'll move into a discussion of the external audit of the annual financial statements, the RFP. We'll be, we will be going out to RFP for our external audit this year. We, we have some time but since we were meeting, I wanted to get it on the agenda and start and start the discussion. I will open the floor first to see if there are any general comments and then I'd like to possibly screenshare. I know we circulated the, the RFP as part of the packet, the existing RFP and the Comptroller's office has provided some comments, so we can talk about those comments in a moment. But prior to that, does anyone on the committee have any comments or anything that they want to discuss about the external audit? And I'll extend that. Legislator Maloney I see that you're here too and we appreciate you being here. Now Legislator Erner's joining us. If, if either of you have any comments, I'd welcome that as well. Just, you can use your visual raising hand because I can't There you go. I can see you Legislator Erner. Okay, so hearing, hearing no comment, why don't, Comptroller Gallagher, do you want to discuss some of your comments and maybe we can work through them? Clerk Feaster if you, Financial Analyst Feaster, if you want to share the screen, maybe that's the easiest way and we can kind of move through these comments.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** So, my apologies for not sending them to the whole committee. I thought the Chair should get them first. And I'm happy to send them around if that's helpful. But our comments really fall into a few different categories. One is, you know that we have some operational suggestions that I think would make the relationship between the auditors and everybody in the county better. The second is, we have some specific things that we think would be very helpful to making sure that we have systems in place in Ulster County, particularly on the internal control side. And so, the third thing is really dates and I'll go through these here. And I think, I think the first change here is something that might take a lot of conversation because there's been different setup in terms of the relationship with the external auditors, so I'd rather not get hung up on this first thing and then maybe come back to it at the end. But one thing that I think would be helpful is that right now, the, the auditors really worked directly for the legislature and are available to the legislature. I have found a delayed sense of being able to reach them with a question, funneling those to the legislature but I understand the legislature may want to control that contact going forward. So, I didn't really want to get into it, but I thought maybe you would consider adding, making the Comp-, the external auditors available to the Executive, legislator-, Legislative, and Comptroller's office, staff. We could set that aside and move on, if that's okay. Because I think that's going to take...

**Chair Bartels:** I suspect, yeah, I suspect that this, so first of all, let me just let me jump in for one second say, um, you know, we'll look through this. I did not have a lot of lead time looking at this. But that is not to say that I don't really appreciate the comments, and I think the, the whole committee will probably want to read and digest these, which is why I think it's okay to now do a fast pass. And I'll circulate it through, through Amber to all committee members, and anyone else who's interested, obviously. But I do think that this proposal is probably going to generate the most discussion is my expectation. And just for point of clarification, you're, you're talking about, when you talk about the engagement period, you're, you're talking about, not only the, the lead up to the

actual audit itself, but then throughout the, the following year, when you talk about your difficulty in reaching.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Yeah, exactly. The second change really has to do with having a date that they provide a draft of the draft audit to us to, you know, to us being the bigger us. And, you know, we thought it would be helpful to put in a date there of September 15. And then also, we wanted to note, and you can see Randy's comments here, about the October 7th deadline. You know, our team thought this is really due back on 9/30 anyway, so it may make sense to move that date up. And I want to say something else about the comments here. Although you're not seeing Sam Sonnenburg's notes in a comment field, a lot of these comments came from Sam's suggestions. Him bringing his state audit authority to bear in reviewing the RFP, so you're not going to see him because he generated the original document. So. So, that's, that's the second one is really just considering dates. I think it would be helpful for you to define a date in the RFP by which you want a draft because otherwise the draft can bump right up against the final.

**Chair Bartels:** Can I, Can I take a moment just an, ask Amber, the experience from last year, can you recall, or maybe even if you don't, we could get a note, if you can make a note to find out. When we received the draft in relation to the final last, last year.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** I can tell you that Drescher & Malecki presented on the draft without having an actual final form draft before the audit committee. So, they gave the presentation saying this is where you're gonna stand in comparison to other counties and regions; this is where your fund balance is, but we don't have the final for you just yet.

**Chair Bartels:** But the committee was looking at a draft document?

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Yes, not the final form draft. But yes.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay.

**Legislator Walter:** Can I ask a question?

**Chair Bartels:** Sure. Legislator Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** In your recollection, and I have two pieces of this in my head. But how much is different in the past between the draft and the final? So, I'll start with that. I have a second piece to this. But you know, is it typically that that's the draft and then the final is pretty much the same? Or is it typical? Okay, because the other part is, for me a draft, I found at least in the last time, there were things that we kind of like we would love to know this much know that and to me that you say that about the draft so that it's in the final, not just so that you put it out into the ether. And so if having a draft is intended to ask them for something to add to it, then I think that's a different conversation of like, then how much time is reasonable to give them to actually add those things, which might be, it has to be sooner than September 15th. If it's really just that we're just seeing it and then there's minor change-. It's like, well, we're just waiting for one piece of data, you know, we're not seeing much of a change, then it's sort of irrelevant that there even is a draft.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** It's pretty consistently similar in my, in my past two years of experience. Other people here, have been here longer, but I think the condensed timeframes mean we really don't feel like we have the opportunity to give significant feedback that would necessitate changes. So, I was trying to build in that kind of time to allow a deeper look at, it was kind of a thought.

**Chair Bartels:** And I can say from my experience it has been pretty, pretty similar as well. I don't know if Amber has a different point of view from our financial staff.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** I agree and the pieces that are final pieces are a lot smaller. Like the general fund is going to be consistent, it's going to be in final form. And that's really what they're largely presenting on.

**Legislator Walter:** So, I would like to propose that we actually asked for a draft, with enough time that we could actually ask for more stuff and give them the time to give it to us. Because I found it very frustrating feeling like whatever we were asking for. It was, it just sort of felt like it kind of disappeared. And so I don't know. I mean, at this point, it looks like it's three weeks, from the 15th to the seventh, that does seem reasonable, three weeks. That's assuming the seventh is what it's going to be. But I think that should be the consideration, is that it then allows us to ask for more.

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, I think, I think having, well, one, I think it's a good suggestion to have a date, because I'm assuming that prior to that insertion, it just said that we needed, we needed the draft prior to the final-form period, which could have been the day before, could be. So, having a date is a helpful and very constructive suggestion, I think. Between now and when, in our next meeting, I can definitely commit to working with our financial staff on backing out the dates of when we need finals, and etc..., so that we allow for something like the three-week turnaround. Does that make sense? Okay, now, I also just want to say I cannot see you all at once, when we're, when we're in this mode. I will keep switching back and forth. But if I move on, and someone does want to speak, please speak up, just at that point if we're moving on to the next item, and I haven't recognized you, and I apologize in advance if that happens. Okay, so um, and you had made the comment, also about the, the final date. To back out to the, to the SAC filing, which is due on 9/30/21. Is that...

**Comptroller Gallagher:** That's what it was, that's when it was due last year. So, we may want to look at the date for this coming year and build in whatever number of weeks we want prior to that for the draft.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** If I could just make a point here. I mean, you're, you're basically, April 1st, it's gonna take three weeks minimum, probably four weeks to have an RFP out. And another few weeks to select a firm, and then you need to have legislative approval on a contract. I mean, you're, you're looking at basically almost June at this point.

**Chair Bartels:** Marc, just for, sorry to interrupt. This is for, this is, we, this year...

**Deputy Executive Rider:** Oh, you have somebody for 22. Sorry.

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, this is for 2023. It would be a very, very reasonable observation, if we were talking about this year, we'd be behind the power curve, but we're trying to get ahead of the power curve. So, absolutely. So, yeah, this is for 2023, which I think it's good. I'm happy that we're undertaking this discussion early enough to have a meaningful conversation about what we're putting out there. Oka.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Would you like for me to go on?

**Chair Bartels:** Yes, please.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Okay, so I want to mention that we had a lot of internal discussion about these required tasks, because the third bullet down has issue a report on the county's major financi-, Federal Program's Compliance with Federal Regulations and Internal Control Over Compliance. That

language is single audit language specifically. But we debated whether or not we should add a bullet about, about an analysis of internal controls. I mean, obviously, we're always looking at it. And we've been working with Amber to get some of the workpapers from Drecsher & Malecki from last year and there were some work papers in there that, you know, have kind of given us some pause as to whether or not they really thought about internal controls from the external auditor's point of view. So, I just want to mention that we may be back to you guys with a bullet in here that would speak directly to that, but we didn't single it out right here. So, it's not here now, but it may come. However, that leads to the next point, which is the last bullet that we added, which is to let these audit firms know that they're on notice. We want them to, they may need to make workpapers available. We may go back to them and request workpapers. We don't want them to be surprised by that. Obviously, the client could always re-ca-, request them but it's not that common. But we want them to be on notice of that. Yeah, so that's the last bullet here. The next change, the next suggestion is down in qualifications and experience, where we really felt that we could expand upon the desired qualifications and experience and we just, we wrote some language that we thought would be a starting point to, to access that. Obviously, you know, in working with Amber and the committee, if, if people feel like the language is too, is drafted in such a way, that's going to be too narrow, that firms won't reply to the RFP, we don't want to do that. But we want to lay out, we want people who know what they're doing, who have worked with counties of our size before, et cetera, et cetera. And then on the staff assigned, the second paragraph there. At first, we had fieldwork, staff assigned to the engagement fieldwork, must have a minimum manager with a CPA, and we decided that it's really not just specific to fieldwork, it's about the whole engagement. We want to make sure we have a CPA who has experienced, who's overseeing the operation, and I think we've had that, but it just a good idea to put it in there. So.

**Chair Bartels:** Any comments or questions here? Legislator Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** Yeah, I mean, I think this is, it's helpful, because what ended up happening is like we make our decision and these are the kinds of things we're looking for and then there's people who we've just, who shouldn't have really applied and, and it, I think the more we could do to encourage the people who are actually going to be in our pool of decisions that we're actually picking between are all the only applications we have in front of us, rather than having this unfortunate, like, you know, put, someone puts work into it. And they're really never going to make it to our final four, or three. So, I think the this, and then we may want to, there might be, I think, if we had a thoughtful, and we may even have the transcripts of like our decisions in the past of what we wanted and didn't want, we might want to just articulate that right from the beginning, because we kind of know, I don't remember, but it's written somewhere. Yeah.

**Chair Bartels:** I mean, the thing that I, that I would add, or I want, I would want to just investigate is, and I think it's important to specify that, that at least on our engagement, there'll be some people with this specific experience. But I wonder for when you talk about narrowing the field so much that as we go into people who have specific field, experience dealing with counties, I know that when we talk to you know about the budget analysts, sometimes on, which is different, I get than, than this, but I'm not sure how much we narrow the field by requiring specifically county audit work. It may be, we may end up with only two firms that could meet five years of experience on counties. I mean, again, I'm not going to name the firm, but the firm that we had doing, the budget analysis, arguably, for many years, arguably is the most experienced firm in the state with the most engagement on a county level. But that didn't necessarily mean that they provided the best work product. And again, I recognize that a budget analysis is different than, than a, an audit, an outside audit. But I, I'm posing the question, because I'm not a CPA, but I wonder how different an analysis of an outside audit of, an analysis of a city, for example, that may be a much larger city than Ulster County but would leave them an unqualified. For example, a firm that did an outside analysis of New York City's budget by this wouldn't be qualified to do our analysis. And yet New York City, I'm using the most extreme

example I can think of. So, I think it's valuable to be more specific, but I would want to have a sense of how much we were limiting the pool.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** That makes sense to me. And maybe we say New York State municipalities. I mean, I think...

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, I would feel more comfortable with that, for sure.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Yep. The next change really has to do with IT. I mean, I think we're all in recognition that information technology, security is absolutely critical. And we think it would be great to have a preference for firms that have staff professionals who can assess and comment on that aspect of county, of our work. But we didn't, you know, we wouldn't make it a requirement because I think, I think audit firms are just starting to gear up in this area, recognizing what a large risk it is. And this kind of puts people on notice, like, we want you to have this capacity even if you don't have, have it right now. It doesn't, we don't want to stop people from applying, but we kind of want to let the field know, like, things are changing, and you guys need to gear up for this.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** Yeah. You know, I mean, especially by the time this comes in place, it's even. I mean, it's almost past important. But still important. I wonder if, you know, I've definitely seen RFPs, where they actually encourage the applicant to partner with others, and other organizations in the application to meet all of the needs. And so, I wonder whether it makes sense to back away and just sort of hope for this and maybe not get it or put the actual language that say, partnerships are encouraged if you know, you can sub-allocate to another group who can cover the, you know, any, any elements that you feel your group cannot? That way, we get it all. I mean, why not? Right?

**Chair Bartels:** Anyone else have any comments on this? Okay.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Inside the proposed plan, we thought that, um, when the respondents come back on the RFP, it would be very helpful to have them, when they break apart the tasks, identify the level of staff and the hours, you know, estimated hours of assignment, how they're building their dollar figure response. That might help us identify, you know, where the work is going. And then also, we went back and forth internally a lot on this narrative description of the approach taken on various elements of the audit. And it may be that this results in kind of fluffy language, that doesn't really tell us what we want to know but it does give us the opportunity to see how they're answering these types of questions, because we had a lot of questions about like, how did Drescher & Malecki, how do they decide, for example, what regulations and laws they want to look at? How did they decide their sample size and testing procedures? Granted, I understand they're probably using software to do some of that. So, we just we wanted to see if we asked an additional question here, if they would be able to provide some better insight into how they're approaching the audit.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** Yeah, I really like this one, too. I mean, I think back with the budget RFP, and when we did not understand approach, it was a problem, especially. And I think they should absolutely know their approach and have it planned ahead of time. And so, there's no reason not to be able to provide it. I don't even I wouldn't even say it's fluffy, I think it's a really important part of applying is to tell us how you're planning on doing it.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** That's great. I mean, we actually have like a very detailed approach, set of questions that I condensed into this single bullet that I'd be happy to send to the team. So, you, you,

the whole committee could see and kind of say like, no, that really should be identified separately. I think that's the extent of... yeah.

**Chair Bartels:** If you could do that Comptroller Gallagher, that would be great. I also like, I also like this question. And in general, I like the idea of us doing something a little bit different on the RFP. I mean, and I mean that really as a general comment, just in that, if we're asking a different question, we may actually provoke a different response, you know, versus the some, some organizations that may have seen a standardized RFP. And I'm not just talking about from our organization, but from any organization. They see a standardized RFP that they've seen year over year over year, again, reflecting on the budget analyst. And I don't want to dwell on the firm, the firm that will not be named, but that firm replied, in an identical manner, despite the fact that we asked different questions. And that really highlighted an issue for me that I'm not sure that you even read our RFP, you just go ahead and hand it, in what you normally hand in. So, so I too appreciate trying to tease out a little more detail. And if you have other questions, the committee would, would welcome to see them and to discuss them further.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** That's great. Well, we will follow up. One thing we didn't include in, in this red line, but came to mind was like how would the audit firm address any potential audit problems if they should arise during the audit? Who would they direct them to? You know, we wanted to get a sense, but again, I think that's something that maybe would be written into the contract into the scope of services for, for discussion later, but we're happy to send, you know, some additional comments around I really appreciate the opportunity to present these that we did here today. So, thanks.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay, thank you. Okay, so moving on, we're going to discuss... if, does anyone, first before we move on, does anyone have any other comments on the RFP for audit? I expect that, again, we'll circulate that the detail that Comptroller Gallagher mentioned plus these questions, this detail that you've just seen. I will work with the financial team to backdate the dates that we're discussing and at our next meeting, hopefully we'll be closer to finalizing an RFP well ahead of schedule. And we'll get it, we'll get it out in a timely manner. I'm seeing no other comments on this. Let's move on to the compensation salary study. This is required by the recently passed Ulster County Fair Pay and Salary, Salary Equity Policy that was established by Resolution number 26 of 2022. I placed that, that's in your OneDrive. I know it's, it's recent memory, so everyone should, should recall. I'd like to take this opportunity to begin the discussion, both with our finance, our financial staff, the Comptroller's Office, both of which are referenced in the policy, and Deputy Executive Rider, we'll probably, we'll start with Deputy Executive Rider to understand what's being undertaken by the Executive's Office and Personnel currently. You know, my understanding is that there's a management compensation, but this resolution actually requires a more comprehensive comp, corporate compensation study that extends beyond management. So, I'd like to open the conversation and then have a discussion strategy about how we may move forward. If I can begin by just asking Deputy Executive Rider to let us know, maybe you could just provide for us what's, what's currently happening, what's in the works.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** Sure. So, there's members of the Finance and Budget team working with the Personnel Department currently on putting together a, as you said, nonunion management only salaries study. They've had several meetings up till this point and passed out different things. Some of the members of finance are evaluating titles that we have in management compared like going out, reaching out to, I think we picked five counties that were similar in size, they do meet the requirements of the resolution, where some of them are to the north of us, some of them are to the south of us. We tried to pick ones that by both population and employee base, were similar to Ulster County and not too far out as far as cost of living as well. So, starting to evaluate titles, but again, management only. That is about I believe it's 180-some, close to 200 individual employees, and a little over 100 to 120 titles. So, right now just comparing titles to other counties, and then also

comparing salaries of those titles with Ulster County and the comparable five counties. That is the process that Finance and Budget and Personnel are currently going through. Whether they could expand that scope, I mean, that's probably possible. I just want to point out that Amber put, you know, one of the proposals from the last RFP in in the OneDrive. It is really like everything is in, in that schedule of, of costs but one might say \$40,000, you can't just do a salary study without evaluating the titles and doing all the other work. So, it is really, for that proposal about a \$90,000 cost, and that was for, again, nonunion management only. So, they were looking at about 110 titles and 180 employees. So, and doing it over a four-to-five-month period. I do think that it is going to be very aggressive to get this done prior to the 23-budget. But you know, the work that's already been done under management will definitely be done prior to that. I'm just not sure expanding it to the full 1300. It'll be, it'll be tight. Whether you use a consultant, in-house, whether you use a consultant to only do the union titles and allow Personnel and Budget to continue on the work they've done. You know, it's up to however you all want to do it. I just think no matter what you do, it's going to be a tight timeline.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay, before I go to you, Legislator Maloney, I just want to, point of clarification. So, what, do you have a specific estimated end time on the work that Personnel and the Executive's office is doing currently?

**Deputy Executive Rider:** I don't. I can, I meant to follow up with them prior to this meeting and have been in meeting after meeting up until now. Since you and I kind of text back and forth and tried to get that information. I will follow up with an email to the committee on when they think that work is going to be done.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** They're about three or four months into it. I believe. So.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay. And then my, my other question again, and then I'll hand it over to you, Legislator Maloney. But my other question was, I know that a, something was undertaken, a management study in at some point was undertaken. And I'm wondering, was there any work that we can look to from that previous study that, that happened?

**Deputy Executive Rider:** I mean, they had really just gotten to the point of, and I haven't seen any, I didn't see any work product come back. They had gotten to the point of interviewing individuals in, in management, on their own position and department heads on, on what the positions and duties were. Kind of a Bob's from Office Space, What do you say you do here? That kind of thing, but I'm not. I have not seen any work product that came from that. And I think it was, I think, I haven't looked at it in a while. But I think we expended about \$6,000. Somewhere in that range on that study before it was, was paused.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay, Legislator Maloney.

**Legislator Maloney:** Thank you. Yeah, that was frustrating that that was paused. And we spent, I mean, essentially, we just threw \$6,000 out the window. I thought it was a little more than that. So, there's a couple of different things. You mentioned what, Marc, you mentioned, what you're doing now. For three or four months, I'd love to know what's been done so far. And what you have out of three- or four-months' worth of work is. We've been, we've been hearing about this. But something that concerns me is it sounds like we're just going to compare to other counties. When it comes to management, I really think we should be looking around the county, how much does every attorney in the county make? And then you start to say, well, why do attorneys in the Public Defender's office make so much such a different amount than the County Attorney's office than the DAs? Then the

Legislative attorneys, then I mean, that's, that's really what we want to get down to. I mean, just comparing to counties, to other counties is nice. But that's what that's not what we really need to do. Or that's half of what we need to do. The other half, we really need to look around our own county and make sure there's equity. And I think a lot of us think there's not, which is why and when you see where the equity is, and isn't, which is why, you know, I just wonder why. Maybe that wasn't the goal to begin with. Which is why it also concerns me about the conflict, when many of the people that are going to be looked at in management are under the Executive's wing and you have the Executive doing it. Most people I talk to think it doesn't make much sense to have the Executive essentially overseeing a management study when the majority of management is under his umbrella. So, there's just a natural conflict there that I don't think a lot of, that many people would, would say isn't doesn't actually exist. Accountants, you know, we really want to look at. We have a budget analyst, that's a that's an accountant. That makes \$40,000 less than our actual Budget Director. So, what I mean, that's not a CPA. So, what, what are we, I mean, that's, that's what we want to get down into. Some of this, we really want to look inside our own county. Post charter we've never done it. As far as unions go, that's a much easier task. There's obviously going to be positions in management and union. But I mean, I could do that. I mean, I could volunteer, I'll just take a month and I can look on the budgets from other counties and compare to very similar titles, if not exact titles, in unions. Do you know how long it would take me to do the jail? CEOs and the positions that you have in the jail. That is so straightforward to compare to other counties. If we want to throw in and compare to state or, or, or private jails, we could do that too, rather quickly. All that information is readily available. And it lines up exactly. What gets a little more difficult is management. We have a lot of different titles. We have jobs that are a little different, that are similar inside one job that, like I just said, we have a budget analyst that's a CPA, but our Budget Director is not. So, if you go and do just an accountant, you know, if you just say, okay, all the accountants working in the county, compare them to each other, that Budget Director, which I think would normally you would expect that to be as a CPA isn't. So, that's where it gets a little more difficult to line up exactly. So, it's not going to be perfect. And we're going to have disagreements, especially when it, no matter who does it, whether we do it in-house or a combination of in-house and / or, and we hire somebody or we go totally private, your, there's going to be people that disagree with the comparison or the conclusion on the comparison.

But I think, I mean, I've thrown a lot of different things out. I'm curious to hear what other people think about the conflict in the Executive's office, the fact that they left out comparing in County. Curious if people agree that the union's, even though there's more people, it's actually going to be a little more straightforward. And perhaps we break this down. I really wanted to do this in-house first and see what we got. We've never done it before so anything we get I think is going to be valuable. But if, if we do go out on some of it, there is a value there where there companies that do this, they have software. And after they do it once it's almost like we can use their template to kind of plug in and do it ourselves next time. But I definitely think, I mean, these are the, this is why we're having this meeting and talking about this, we have to we have to figure out what we're going to do, how we're going to do it who's going to do it. And, and specifically what we're going to ask for beyond what was even in the legislation, which there is some mandatory things that we want looked at in the legislation. When you look at unions, you know, there's, we also want to compare to the towns. That was a big issue. I had talked to Marc about that in the past, which we've kind of just stopped that. With this latest DPW raises, we were in the first time in our county, we were losing DPW workers to highway departments and other counties where the highway department used to be the training ground for the county, where it was actually going the other way, because of how, quite honestly how poorly our DPW men and women were being paid. So, I think it's, you know, to compare a carpenter. I mean, obviously, we have carpenters and engineers and everything else working in the county, we can compare them to the private sector as well. But there may be disagreements about what we come up with, to what the private sector, what we say the private sector average is, but I think it's so those are the things we got to figure out. That's where I'm at on a lot of them. But I

definitely think when we, when we look at management, no matter who does it, we need to look around inside the county and compare it to ourselves.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** Yeah, and I don't want to say that we're not going to do that at all. So let me get back to you. I mean, I think they're, they're undertaking that too. But as you said, that's an easier task. I think initially, they were going outside and doing that part first, comparing attorneys within. Once you've done that, then I think it's a lot easier. Plus, we may see that there's all these other counties that we're looking at, that the DSS lawyers make different than the District Attorneys and, and that we're actually doing it similar to other counties. Not that that's necessarily right.

**Chair Bartels:** Comptroller Gallagher.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** Yeah, I, first of all, let me let me echo what Legislator Maloney said. I think the private sector comparison is super important right now because we do see such staffing shortages, and it is so hard to retain and recruit. But I also have a question for Deputy Executive Rider. Does the management analysis that you're doing include the elected officials' offices? Is, you know, the Deputy Clerk included? Is the Deputy Comptroller? The DIAC? Are those titles included?

**Deputy Executive Rider:** I believe they are yes. That's, it's all nonunion management titles.

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, so seeing no other hands for the moment, I would echo Legislator Maloney's comments, particularly as it relates to comparing to the private sector and I think when you compare to the private sector, you cannot just compare straight salaries. You need to compare the full benefit packages that county employment offers. You know, I feel like particularly as it relates to management, you know, we readily, we readily hear management compared to the private sector. or as, as being, and I'm just going to, this is anecdotal, I'm not attributing it to any one person, but say the statements that management is underpaid as compared to the private sector. And yet, you know, I'm not sure that, that, uh, that a deep analysis of salaries in Ulster County would reflect that when compared against the full benefit package. So, I think it's, I think it's pretty important to undertake that as well. And I would definitely like to see, Deputy Executive Rider, the details of the, of what, of what it is, what metrics the Personnel Department is actually utilizing to undertake this analysis, because that would be a good starting point, even independent of what their results are. But I think it would be important to know what exactly they're, they're looking at. I have Legislator Walter and then Legislator Gavaris. But before you speak, Legislator Walter, I just want to say I did get, I have an occasionally unstable internet connection, and I did get bounced off for a moment. So, I'm going to ask that if I do get bounced off, if I'm suddenly gone, Legislator Lopez, would you chair in my absence if that, if that happens? I feel like I'm hoping I'll stay put, but just if I'm suddenly gone, it's not me hanging up on purpose. I'll, I'll endeavor to get right back via phone or something else. So, Legislator Walter, the floor is yours.

**Legislator Walter:** Thanks. Um, so Legislator Maloney asked a lot of questions. I don't think I can remember them all. But I will say of the ones I remember, I feel very strongly that this, well, managerial study, but that the whole study is external, is done by an external organization. I think that that, it, for several reasons. I mean, it's not just sort of accomplished, just a conflict of interest. I want a group of people who this is their priority. This is their job. This is what they're working on. Not the time they find, you know, between the other work they do. I want them to be committed to this, because it's very complicated and complex, just as you described, and Chair Bartels, with all of the intricate details behind it. I also feel like, I agree that this should be county comparisons, not cross-county. You know, maybe some cross-counties there. But A) I don't see how cross-county makes internal county comparisons easier. I don't think that's true. I think it's, it's a whole other, it's almost apples and oranges sometimes when you're comparing between two counties. I think that I would agree that the focus within the county is extremely important. And I also think this idea of

managers and other levels in one story is very, very important. Because in some departments, it's very interesting, would be very interesting to know what the highest people are being paid compared to the lowest people are being paid. And when they're separated as to different studies, it's not always obvious how any kind of those disparities that might exist. There might have been more questions that he asked, but I don't remember them to say what my opinion is.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Gavaris.

**Legislator Gavaris:** Thank you. I just want to agree with this. You need to use the total compensation package as your guideline, just taking straight salary is not beneficial because public sector is predominantly going to have a lot better benefit package than the private sector. In terms of comparing titles, just straight across the board like attorney, that's where you get into an area that I don't think we're going to win on. You know, you've got corporate attorneys, you've got criminal, civil, there's, there's many different modalities within the title of attorney, and they're gonna, get, make very different regions of salary. So just to take a title or, or, you know, an educational background. It's only one metric to use his or study and to level the playing field. I don't think we should just, you know, use that as the only one.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Maloney.

**Legislator Maloney:** Real quick with regards to attorneys. I mean, I agree, attorneys are different, but I mean, I think a Public Defender and a DA, I think, and I actually do think most of the attorneys in the county, and you could, whether it's the County Attorney, or you know, go around the county. I actually think that you take certain things with, you know, added data as far as well, yeah, this attorney is naturally going to get paid more because of this but you still have the comparison. I actually would like to see our turn, I've talked to a lot of legislators over the past couple of years, we would like to understand the difference between the Public Defender and the DA through the years and or the ADAs, and the Public Defenders and whatnot. With regards to what Legislator Walter said before, I actually agree, or I certainly could agree. I like the idea of maybe breaking this down, and maybe us performing some of it in County and some of it outsourcing it. And I think that'd be something I mean, if the Chair wanted to go to a vote down the road, this meeting or the next, as far as when, after we do have these conversations, breaking it down. If we do decide to outsource the management part, we could probably save some hours. For Marc, maybe the Executive at that point would say, okay, whatever we have done, which I'm not sure how much has been done yet, scrap it, let's spend our time doing other things for the people, because this is going to be done externally, and independently. But I think that would, and I honestly think that, like I stated before, I think the unions are going to be, expect when you go into the private when we're comparing privately, definitely a big part of it. We've all talked about that before that, that is fringe is a major part of a government job, and you can't just compare salaries. So that will be part of it, comparing to the private sector will be a little more difficult. But the part where we go, and we just check our, our COs, our road patrol, DPW, a lot of DSS, when we just look to Dutchess, Orange, and whatever, Green, we're going to, that's going to be a pretty, a pretty, I don't think it's going to take a lot of time to look, it's going to be pretty lined right up. And then the private sector part will take a little longer. Maybe that is something we decided to do in house, which is probably 75% of the county or if not more, we outsource the other part. But those are the things we're here to decide. But I, I'd be completely comfortable with what Eve said, and outsourcing the management part, and then maybe discussing what to do with the rest.

**Chair Bartels:** Deputy Executive Rider.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** Just a couple quick points. One, I want to make sure that everybody here realizes, so the majority of this study sits in personnel. Our personnel officer serves a term, which

means that she cannot be, she doesn't serve at the will of the County Executive. So, while I understand, in some ways, the concern about conflicts, it's really within that individual's wheelhouse and within that department's wheelhouse to do something like this. And by the way, the individual that is our Personnel Director has done a study like this for a large organization prior to coming here. So let me get the information on, on what's been done before we determined to just throw that all out and do it fully externally. The other thing is when I said that we're comparing titles, right now we're not comparing things to the private sector. We are looking at public sector, other counties, and again, we may be looking internally, but when, when we're looking at attorneys, from here to Orange County, to Rensselaer County, Albany County, the counties that we're looking at, the attorneys are going to be doing the same work. It's not like they're drastically doing something different in those other counties, than we're doing here. They're all doing, you know, whether it's Public Defenders, ADA's, DSS attorneys, County Attorneys, you know, they're doing similar work. And I think it makes sense to compare the titles and make sure that we're comparing apples to apples.

**Legislator Walter:** Legislator Walter. Yeah, I mean, we know in the private sector that a physician in Dutchess County makes a very different amount than a physician in Ulster County. And so, it's not really true. And it's not fair. There's other things going on. This is a larger conversation about why reimbursable rates are different in different areas. But, you know, I, I again, say that the, the comparison across counties is just a much more different story than the comparison again, of the Public Defender and the DA. I, I just... And, we've often been told, we need to hire this person at this rate because Dutchess County hires this person at this rate, and that's not really, you know, that's not as informative as understanding what someone who does communications, or does, who's an attorney, you know, is being paid in our county. This is where we live. This is where our homes are. This is where we buy our food. And this is the more logical comparison, again internally, because there's just a lot that are different about how, how things work in our neighboring counties. And so, I, you, I know you don't know yet. My guess is that I wouldn't be surprised if this internal review is not being, it's not happening. Because everything we've ever seen is oh, it seems to be a comparison across counties.

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, and I would, um, I would echo that. I mean, to the extent that, you know, I think the most valuable information is going to be an internal, internal, meaning inside the county analysis. I mean, I think that there are, I think that this, this is complicated. And even this discussion sort of highlights where it gets complicated. You're speaking about attorneys. You know, we've chosen the one example that I think is, in some ways, the most unique. For me, I'd be more concerned about an attorney analysis within the county, looking at attorney against attorney across county departments, but I'm, recognizing that there's an incredible pressure in terms of hiring right now. Because, particularly in this market, where people are telecommuting, attorneys are getting paid much higher rates. I mean, I don't know if, if any, in the private sector, I don't know if anyone watched, you know, the, some of the confirmation hearings for the Supreme Court. But in in talking about the candidate's resume, and her time in the public sector, as a Public Defender, it was commented on more than once that you must have, that was a calling. You know, it's like I think we know that attorneys can make more money, not in the, talking to two attorneys here, not in the, not acting attorneys currently, but, but not in the, not in the public sector. So, it's like we pick the one title that has many, many complications. But beyond that one title, I'd like to see a comparison within the county. I'd like to know what an accountant working in the public sector in Ulster County, makes against a similar accountant in the private sector, working in Ulster County. What you know, what does that difference look like? And that would be something that would apply potentially to, you know, to beyond management. That would apply to, to Union positions as well. I'm gonna go to you one second Deputy Executive Rider, but I also just want to, to raise the idea to hear from both the Comptroller and, and our financial analysts, not as the Clerk of this committee, but in a combat capacity as financial analysts, because the resolution does speak to both offices potentially taking this on, or they're taking it on within our finance, the legislative financial office, or taking it on with the

comptroller. So, I'm going to, because Deputy Executive Rider's hands up, I'm gonna go to you, Deputy Executive Rider and then go, go to open that portion of the discussion, if I can.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** I could just be careful being to kind of insular with our, with what we're looking at. I mean, we don't have residency requirements here to work. I mean, we have people who live in other counties that work here. We have Ulster County residents who work for other counties, both in the private and public sector. I think, looking at just salaries within Ulster County, and maybe many of those individuals do work, even if they work for firms in Ulster County, outside of Ulster County, I just think we got to look more broadly. And I think all the methodology that I've seen in these salary studies from consulting groups that submit proposals, recommend looking at somewhere between three to five other municipalities slash counties when doing this kind of work. So that's what we're modeling our work after. And I think that's important work. I do think looking inside Ulster County, in both the public sector, as Legislator Maloney said, looking at other municipalities and towns, the city, what they pay as well, that's important, but I do I do think we have to look outside of Ulster County, with whatever you decide to do.

**Chair Bartels:** I think again, and I did not mean it as a strictly limiting factor. I think. I think the scope needs to be broad enough to contain that as well. Like if we're looking at comparative counties, you know, that's one component, but I'm very, I'm very interested in looking within the county and by that I'm not I'm not talking about just the private sector but, as Legislators Maloney pointed out, the other municipalities. Again, when you talk about losing employees to other municipalities within the county, it just, that alone demands that we look at those, those job titles within the county as well. Legislator Maloney, did you want to speak on this before I go to financial analysts and Comptroller?

**Legislator Maloney:** I just wanted to say that I agree with, with Marc on the, on the other county part. That I also think that you do, and you take it with a grain of salt. I mean, we're all, these, nothing is going to be perfect ever on this note. There's, it's really not ever going to be perfect, because there's always other things to consider, like, the closer you are to the city, county wise, the more expensive your cost of living is, but we can, but we can figure it out when we look at it. If we see Dutchess County CEOs are getting paid \$9,000 more a year with the same benefit package and retirement package, then, I think, I don't think Dutchess is that much more expensive to live in. But I can figure that out. I can come up with that analysis myself, but still take a lot of value out of that comparison, especially when we're voting to approve contracts, union contracts and whatnot, or negotiating union contracts for Marc. So, I do I agree with everything you've said. And I agree with everything Marc said about the value, the, the need for both the private and comparing to other counties. And the same thing we can do with Green County. And it'll be, if the Green County CEOs are making \$4,000 more a year and everything else is similar, then we're really realizing we're underpaid, you know, and we can figure that all out. That it's a little cheaper to live in Greene County. We can come up with that. We need the comparison to give ourselves something to work off of at a lot of different times: budget time, when we're approving or not approving management raises, creating positions, approving union contracts. We need this document every couple of years to help us.

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, and I think part of it, and then I'll go, go to you, Amber and to, to you March. I think also, in addition to that, the, I'll just call it the narrative, but the backstory at least of, particularly within departments where we're seeing challenges that helps to fill up, fill that gap too. Legislator Maloney talked about the challenges in DPW. There are similar challenges, in in corrections, right? So those challenges in terms of hiring. When it becomes really hard to hire, which it's hard to hire a cook right now in Ulster County, and the private sector. So, so I get that. It's hard across the board. But it may be that when you take that detail from the narrative, and you apply it to the analysis that comes from the study, that you arrive at a conclusion that says, Okay, this is why we're unable to hire, and this is how we might be able to address that. And it's critically important

that we do. So, Legislator Walter, do you want to make a comment just following, or do you want me to...

**Legislator Walter:** They can do it, and then now I'll be third.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay. Okay. So let me, let me go to our financial analyst, to Amber just to take a moment. Again, this resolution to remind everyone contemplated due to undertaking this in house. So, I really like to just give you the floor to talk about what undertaking this internally for the Legislative Fiscal Analysts. I know that Natalie Kelder is not with us here today. But you can speak on behalf of the, the two of you in the department since it's so technically department of two. So.

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Okay, so the biggest thing about this, I think, is just the amount of cooperation that it takes to get it done. I do feel like a lot of the information that we've resolved within the resolution to, to complete has at a minimum been started at some point in time in some other capacity. So, I'm very curious to see what's already been done at this point in time. And, also to see how much of this is contained within the civil service agreements. As far as like the qualifications and licenses and work conditions that are required for the civil service positions. I think a lot of that's already predetermined within those. So, a lot of information gathering and a lot of cooperation, talking to other departments and divisions. And I'm, I'm curious how much of it, like where we are in the process of gathering this so far.

**Chair Bartels:** And by that you mean, not just in the management study that's been undertaken, but just the information that exists currently for the rest of government operations, including all the union organizations?

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** Right.

**Chair Bartels:** Comptroller Gallagher.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** So, my first thought in reading the resolution, because I didn't discuss it with Legislator Maloney before it was proposed, was I'm going to come right back to you guys and ask for a handout to outsource this. Because I think it would take a big, big chunk out of our internal audit function. I do think we have the capacity, I mean, the staff knowledge to do a decent job of it. But it would, it would take a lot, I think it would take us a big chunk of our current internal audit capacity. We did a micro salary study just on elected officials compensation. It was not trivial to get the information. Yes, it is in budgets of other counties. But a lot of times, their most recent budget wasn't online. You know, I found us reminding Albany County, gee you guys should publish your budget, or calling to find out how much do you guys subsidize, you know, how much do employees in your county have to pay for health insurance. So there was a lot of bird dogging just to get that information. You know, I don't really have an opinion, one way or another, I would come back to you guys. If it was, if it was mandated that my department do it, we would gladly do the work. It means other things would be set aside. By other things, I'll just give you an overview of kind of like some of the things on our plate right now. We are just about to put out an audit on our compliance with the investment policy for the county. That's gonna go out tomorrow. We just sent out an audit letter today. We're going to be auditing the collection of real property taxes. So, these are things that might have to get set aside if we were to take on that work. My, my staff, predating me, under the former comptroller has urged this kind of work to be done. Meaning this kind of salary comparison to be done for years and years. So, it is very necessary. And I think we really do want to see it happen. And if and if it is the will that we do it, then we will set aside other things to make sure that it gets done. But I do think it would make take a big chunk out of the audit schedule. Thanks.

**Chair Bartels:** Can, can I ask for clarification? When you say and certainly the expert, the expertise exists, but when you say we'll take a big chunk out, in order to do the full salary study that's, that's contemplated in the policy, which is, which again is every job title in in the county, is that something that the controller's office could undertake without going out? Or would it, would you, would you go to outside? Would you go for outside help in undertaking a full analysis?

**Comptroller Gallagher:** I probably would go for some additional outside help. Right now, we have some budgeted contractual that's not spoken for, because thank goodness, the Resource Recovery Agency isn't continuing to sue us. So, I do think that we would want to bring in additional expertise. But I think that we have strong auditors that if this was, you know, a focus, a directed focus of our team, then we would get it done. Yeah. I do think it would take probably half the internal audit team several months. That would be my guess. And then let me just pause to open it up to Alicia and Sam, who are both here to see if they have anything to add to that.

**Deputy Comptroller Alicia DeMarco:** I mean, I think we can definitely put together some information about the salaries that we have, what their job descriptions are, and if anything, it would just assist in the eventual analysis, if it did occur. I think some of the information is going to be a little bit above our heads to try and compare positions and credentials. But I mean, I'm sure we could conduct some sort of analysis. I don't know if it'll be exactly what everybody's looking for, but happy to try.

**Director of Internal Audit Control Sam Sonnenberg:** Yeah, I mean my, I'm sorry, can you hear me?

**Chair Bartels:** Yes, we can.

**Director of Internal Audit Control Sam Sonnenberg:** My view is, I mean, do I see it? I mean, I think we got one heck of a good force. Between everyone we've got in this unit. I've been, I mean, all of us, you know, really work hard. And, you know, I'm, I'm impressed. And, and I say if you guys felt that that was necessary, we would be able to do it. The question is, you know, in terms of other audits that wouldn't get done, you know, is, you know, would that be, you know, Legislature's priority to say that won't get that or this one won't get done or this won't get done for next year because of that? I think some of these are high priority areas. I mean, I'm talking in general too, and so is the whole unit with correspondence to Alicia, you know, we're looking into cybersecurity. And I think that's a very big area that's going to take a lot of our time and expertise to learn. And I believe right now, that's one of the most important areas to be reviewed, because of all the things that are going on in the world. So, you know, I just want to bring that across that it's not as easy as to say, we will take this off. You asked me, you know, like, anyone say, Sam, please do this. I will break my neck. I'm going to do it. And I'm sure Alicia feels that way. And I'm sure the rest of the staff feels that way. But, you know, I'm just letting you know that, you know, my concern is, are you okay with other things that might be left behind? But we'll do it if we're asked. No problem.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay. I have a lineup of people waiting. But I think, well, let me get let me go to comments first, and then I'll have I have a comment. Go ahead, Legislator Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** Thank you. Wow. So, I will go backwards and just say, from what I hear, it's not that internally, we don't have very skilled people who can do it, I just again, this reiterates the importance of, to me going outside. That we don't want to draw, pull all of the resources, the tremendous amount of resources to do this correctly from our, our Legislative group, or from our Comptroller. That, if we're going to do this, we should do it completely, fully, and right. Also going backwards, it's, you know, it's, I think about the issue and things that have come up with the idea of a position, what the salary is listed in the budget versus how much the person is actually paid. And,

you know, this speaks to not only how complicated it really is to do a salary comparison, because what's in the budget is not necessarily what that person is being paid depending on their steps and everything else. And it speaks to why I'm hesitant. I'm, you know, I'm not going to fight against having County, other county comparisons, but this is why it becomes so, so, you have to take with such a grain of salt, not only do we not know, some of the nuances of how much these people are really being paid for these positions, when they're not in their own county. We can learn it in our own county, of our county employees. So, we're not really comparing the same thing, necessarily, if we do it right here. But also, there's just sort of different kinds of demands in those counties, like I think of when we compare legislative salaries, how different they are. It's built on the expectation, how many people you're representing. There's, there's so many different elements to these other things. Again, not going to fight if the report has other counties in it, but I'm gonna take everything I see in that with so many grains of salt. And then the last thing I want to say is, I'd also be very interested in our in our study, to have a better examination of jobs that we have trouble filling, because I think this is a very important piece of the story. It's, and first of all, there's the salary of the job that's listed versus the salary of a job that actually someone's in. And then really understanding those positions that we consistently, at least contemporarily, have difficulty filling. Because I think it's really important that a deeper dive is looked at, those salaries in particular. Because if we have those listed in our budget, it's because we really believe those people should be, those positions should be filled. And I know that there are several that we are, just have exceedingly difficult time filling, and we might want to make some important decisions as a Legislature on those particular jobs recognizing the importance of them and the problems that cause from not having those people in there.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Gavaris and then Legislator Maloney.

**Legislator Gavaris:** Legislator Maloney first but I'll jump in.

**Chair Bartels:** I'm sorry. You were on my screen.

**Legislator Gavaris:** It's fine. I'll jump in quickly because I don't have a lot of time. Um, I think we should contract this out. I think there's a lot of benefit. Do we know if the county has ever used Michael Richardson for anything with labor relations? And studies? That name sound familiar to anybody? Michael Richardson. Okay. We used him at the town and boy did he help tremendously. He's a labor consultant. Mostly deals with contract negotiations. But he wound up doing a salary study for the Town of Wawarsing and it turned out that the transfer station and the highway department, they were almost actually pricing themselves out of a job because it would have been less expensive for the town to contract their services, right? Rather than continuing to pay the high salary that the union had negotiated. So, they had a wage freeze for almost three years, because they were so highly paid. And that's a piece of information we never would have known. And he was able to show that to them to the point where they didn't even argue. They actually just agreed right away. And they kept the freeze in place for three years, just so they didn't tip the scale and make us have forces to go out and find a contracted service to take it over. So, I don't know, it's just one name I knew from years ago. I don't know if there's others out there. But I think it's beneficial for us, at least for this first time to have it done by an outside source.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Maloney.

**Legislator Maloney:** Thanks. Um, yeah, I think, you know, Tracey mentioned earlier in the meeting, I believe your, we'll leave the name, the names of the budget analysts and, that we got, but I think we've got, just over the past two or three terms, we've gotten much better in this committee, at getting real information out of the firms that we hired to do our two major reports. We'll just say, you know, OD wasn't cutting it. So, in the same way that I think our approach here, you know, that is, the hardest salary study we're ever going to do is the first one. So, you know, and we'll work and get

better and better from there. One thought I had was to outsource, like, Eve had first suggested the management part, and perhaps divvy up. Perhaps the Comptroller would be willing to do you know, Sheriff and Jail. Perhaps Marc and, could work with Personnel to do DSS. Maybe Amber would feel comfortable doing the, the DPW. If I didn't, if I think, I said DPW, Sheriff, and DSS are the three big ones as far as unions go. We can do some of this in-house, talking and communicating with each other. But it would also be interested to see how much different the Comptroller's was to, to the Executive's, to what are our Legislative staff. And I think it's, I think we have to keep in mind that our Legislative staff is servicing 23 part-time elected officials, and then also basically two people, unfortunately. So, but that's another approach we could take. Because if we, I mean, to do all of it in one, one, outsourcing contract is going to be expensive, and we may not get what we want, because we're giving them so much to do. We may get a little, some, some, a little more generics than we want. But that's another thought. I don't know if we're going to decide this today, but, because we're, I mean, we're kind of brainstorming here and trying to come up with what we're coming up with. But I wanted to throw that out as food for thought as well. And something that I think at the end, when we see what we get from the private sector, when we see, we get from our own different electeds, taking on different unions. I think it'd be pretty interesting and valuable going forward to look at what we come up with. And nothing gets the best out of you like competition, and there will almost be a little aspect of that which you always get in the private sector, which is why the private sector always seems to be a little more efficient. So, I think that kind of thing is good to inject into government.

**Chair Bartels:** Do you, so to that, to that point, both to the, both to the people that have been suggested and taking on portions of it, and to the members of the committee, and, and Legislators present, what are your thoughts on that? On the idea of breaking it up? Go ahead, Comptroller Gallagher.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** I mean, happy to do it. I think it would make sense if we're going to take that approach county wide that we really define a set of procedures that we're going to go through so that we have some consistency between the different analyses. You know, I would love nothing more than to look at the Corrections side of the Sheriff's Department. I think you guys all know that. And I did find in our audit, that they are having retention problems. They're losing good people. But the other result is that because we can't get enough staff there, we're having massive amounts of overtime. And to me, that's the bigger issue in that Department, is that the understaffing to meet state requirements is probably resulting in greater costs. You know, as long as we have set procedures, it's fine. To my mind, the salary study, you know, we're happy to participate in whatever way that you guys decide it makes sense. But it doesn't raise revenues. It doesn't save money. And it doesn't necessarily reduce risk other than reducing the risk of losing good people to other places. So, I don't know. You know, I have to look at didn't say like, am I saving the county taxpayer any money by doing it? And as long as we agree on a set of procedures, we're happy to proceed and love the idea of competition.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Gavaris.

**Chairman Gavaris:** Thank you. Yeah, I mean, sort of to the Comptroller's point, you know, there needs to be a set of clear, you know, guidelines here, because otherwise, we're gonna be doing it very different ways. We don't know what it's going to cost. I think, put an RFP out there for somebody to do it and if it is wildly expensive, as Legislator Maloney said, and we do split it off, but if somebody is able to do it, and get us the information we're looking for, and it's being applied the same method throughout management versus union, you know, you have a finished product that you can't question its validity.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Lopez.

**Legislator Lopez:** You know, I, I liked the idea. And I think in a perfect world, that that would work, but I'm a little more cynical when it comes to, you know, pitting, almost pitting people against each other. Well, I, I, and I hate to put it that way. But, um, I think if, if it's going to be department against department that, especially in government, politics are going to be, could potentially be part of the equation. And, you know, I wouldn't want politics to get in the way of, you know, a situation where somebody who doesn't have a leg in the, in the game, you know, doing this from the outside. So, you know, I just, I liked the idea, and I think it would be cost effective, and I have nothing against competition, I just feel a little more, you know, cynical when it comes to the level of politics that can be levied in going down this road.

**Chair Bartels:** Thank you. Legislator Walter.

**Legislator Walter:** Yeah. I'm, I'm, I'm more supportive of, similar what Legislative Gavaris says, it's starting with an RFP that asks for it all. I think that, and this is something that Amber brought up, it's like, how we write this, the, to me, where the compromise could be, is the support and help that Amber and her team and March and her team provide to that group. And then if we, you know, assure that they would be, and Marc, you know, the Executive office, if we made sure our system was a place that made it very easy for them to access the information. Or maybe there are chunks of what they need that Amber and Natalie can pull together and chunks of what they need that March can, that actually reduces the cost, but that it all stays in one place. I would prefer a scenario such as that. And I would also say, you know, Legislator Maloney you made a, I guess it's a good point. I don't know if it's true. But if it is true, it's a good point. You know, we haven't done this this comprehensive in a while. Once it's done in the future, we could use this, the formula that they use in the process that they use, and perhaps the next one, we could do, decide to do in house, because we now see all of the different elements. There might even be less work because, you know, some things just don't change necessarily dramatically. And so it might be that we put the money forward this time, but then next time we, we no longer find the need because we did such a comprehensive job. I think I'd been different if we just did one a year ago or two years ago. But if this is going to be like the first in a while, why don't we just go for the gusto, have some outside organization really just do it thoroughly, and then, like I said, I think we could then save money down the line.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Maloney before I go to you, I, I'm not certain and Deputy Executive Rider, you may be able to confirm this, but I feel like the last county wide salary study was called The Hay Study and it happened, I don't know. I mean, I was here in 2004. It already existed, I think. So, it was...

**Deputy Executive Rider:** It was around 2000.

**Chair Bartels:** Yeah, it was a giant point of contention in that year. I mean, for years. We just, for my first four years in office. We, there was not a moment that went by that we didn't talk about The Hay Study. I think I had a copy of it in, at my home office until fairly recently, when I attempted to remove this clutter that's in soft focus behind you, so, behind me. So. Legislator, it's been a lot of years. Legislator Maloney.

**Legislator Maloney:** Sure. A couple of different quick things. One, it's a quarter century ago, and how many union contracts, raises, and jobs that we created and terminated without ever even really having a full understanding on salary compensation? To the Comptroller's point before about it not necessarily having anything to do with savings, I mean, it could. We could find out that we have a lot of management in positions that are overpaid. We could end up taking that money and raising union salaries without even going to the budget and, or the taxpayer for it. I mean, you know, potentially, there's a lot of movement of money for the taxpayer in all the right ways coming from something like

this and doing it in house, and part of this discussion is possibly doing some of it in house, there's obviously savings there for the taxpayer, because this is a policy that we are now going to be doing. So, but it is minimal, I would say as far as savings percent. The, and it was just a suggestion, I don't look at it as pitting people against each other. You know, it's so frustrating as a Legislator at times, you know, to be into the, the budget cycle, and, and during budget amendments, and to hear all these justifications, without any tangible proof on what we're hearing. Oh, this position is going to do this, oh, the budgets gonna look better if we just hire this person and give him 115,000. And we never have any proof of the performance. We hear how great everybody is and how much we need them. But we never have any evidence. So, we don't have to do, it doesn't sound like people want to do, it was food for thought. But to divvy up the different units, I don't know how that would get political. Or for the Comptroller to go and look at this, compare the Sheriff's department in the Jail to a several other counties. I don't see, and then, and then compare what they came up with. Obviously, we'd have criteria and a format of the things you're going to do. That's obvious. And then to compare it to Personnel, and to compare it to what we come up with. And with our budget analysts. I think that would be so healthy and so much different than what government usually does. So much of what government really needs to be doing. Because we're failing. We waste money. Nobody can argue that inflation is our fault. It's government's fault. We printed a bunch of money, and we didn't spend it, right? That's a big part of inflation. Government needs to be better. And I suggested something that I thought would be, something that could make government better. And what I expected was not to want to do that. And that's fine. If we are going to go out to RFP, which I'm totally okay with, especially on the first one, if that's where everybody's at, let's try to do it within, you know, let's have this, this RFP, look how we want it to look in the next 30 days or so because that's, you know, Marc just pointed that out earlier, in the meeting that there's a process to that, and I really don't want this to become, you know, you know, 50 years rather than 25 years.

**Chair Bartels:** Deputy Executive Rider, then Comptroller Gallagher. You're on mute.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** Just two quick points. One is, you know, with looking at how much it was going to be back in 2018, to do a management study, I just think everybody needs to have eyes wide open. If we're saying we're gonna go for everything on an RFP, it's probably going to be upwards of 200,000 plus dollars for them to do that, especially for trying to expedite it for this year's budget. Two. And maybe this is something that should have been brought up when this resolution was passed. And I don't think it's a reason not to do it. But I just hope everybody's prepared that I don't think it's going to come back that we're overpaying people. I think it's going to come back that that there was zeros under the prior administration for several years. And, and that, that we are going to be underpaying people and I hope that this body is just prepared to rectify that, because the worst thing we can do is do this study and point out that people are underpaid and then not do anything about it. The morale that that will cause to the workforce would be terrible. And so that should have probably been raised during the resolution. Again, I don't think it's a reason not to do the study. I just hope that there's resolve to do that. What if the study shows that.

**Chair Bartels:** If, before I go to you Comptroller Gallagher. It's my recollection, and I'd love to, Amber, if we can just flag this, I'd love to look again, I think again I removed the, my hard copy. So, I'd love to see The Hay Study again. But my recollection of The Hay Study is that The Hay Study said that, recommended at the time millions of dollars in in salary increases in the aggregate. And that's why nothing happened and nothing's happened since then. And I think it's a point we'll take and I'm, and I was looking at the Gallagher proposal, which was included. That was 98,000. The RFP was for 98,000, was for the 100, 102 management titles. I think it would help us all. I, I agree with Legislator Maloney in terms of the, the, the issue of expediency. I mean, one thing I would point out is that if we decide we want to move down on the path toward going to an RFP for the whole, there's nothing that would compel us to, to necessarily if they, if everything comes back, so, if there's a sticker shock, there's nothing that would compel us to having to undertake it, but it is the power of

information coming back. And certainly within each of the proposals, I think there'll be something to gain in terms of the, the descriptive of what's going to be undertaken. In the Gallagher proposal that's included, you know, they, and I just read one section, they say that they will, again, we're talking about management, they said that they would have reviewed job descriptions and other job documentation, etcetera, talking about benchmarks. They said they would use the following guidelines for labor, labor market definition: they would look at organizations that are between half the size and twice as large and population, employee size and budget organizations that provide similar services or have similar growth, or look, profile organizations within a commutable distance, and organizations that the client organization gains employees from and loses employees to. You know, some of what we've contemplated today in talking about who we would be comparing against. So, you know, I just put that out for food for thought as well. Comptroller Gallagher.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** So, I just wanted to mention that, I think that we could think about, including in the RFP, a suggestion to anyone responding that they work to identify ways that Finance and Audit and staff can facilitate reducing the costs. Because I can tell you right now, our, our, our payroll system, MUNIS is a bear to use and we do have people in house who are very facile with it, and who would probably be much more competent, and getting data out of that than a consultant coming in for the first time on that kind of package. So, I do think that we could substantially reduce costs by handling portions of what needs to be done in house and I will be more than happy to dedicate some of my team to that. And maybe we want to think about if we do, do an RFP, writing some of that end. The other thing is, maybe we want to carve out one department or area that we are concerned about losses. Whether it's DPW, or Corrections, or attorneys, and actually try to do a mini salary study, not the management one that Personnel is doing. Maybe something that mirrors it. You know, we could carve out a piece, a chunk, and see what it's like, rather than taking on the whole 1,300. So those are my two suggestions going forward. Thanks.

**Chair Bartels:** And when you say “we” do you mean, we the Comptroller’s Office?

**Comptroller Gallagher:** I mean me, my team. We, or Amber, or Personnel. I'm not really being specific, but I definitely would be willing to dedicate some time of our team to that, to trying something to make it work. Yeah.

**Chair Bartels:** Legislator Maloney.

**Legislator Maloney:** Yeah, I think that's a great suggestion. Maybe, I was just going to ask that the Comptroller, Deputy Executive Rider, and maybe Amber, give us something, their suggestions for the RFP, so we can start to compile it, if you guys have any thoughts over the next couple of days, send them off to Tracey and, and we'll start to think and network on coming up with the, an RFP, I really like March's idea and maybe putting in there that we can compile a lot of this ourselves, we can, we can do a lot of this if you direct us or ask for certain things. And it's also a good idea, it doesn't have to be, you know, every, every couple of years, as we go to do this. It can be far more specific and cheap, you know, when we, we might be comfortable just focusing on certain areas. And, you know, if the language in the resolution needs to be amended to allow us to do that. That's something we can talk about. If we're not, if we're not doing something technically, the way the resolution said, we can amend it and be more specific. I do think every couple, if we're going to do this now, every couple of terms. I do think, you know, deal with, you know, I think right now the Sheriff's department, certainly the Jail is, it should be a focus. I think we've just hired five or six people and we just had five people quit. One somebody was there for 11 years. They are right. Even with the new hires, they're right back to where they were. The overtime is the same. You know, that that needs to be dealt with. We need to figure out what's going on over there and a lot of it has to do with, with salary and hours. So, so that's, I think that was pretty good, what the Comptroller just came up with. But if you guys could send out, give us something on your opinion, kind of like what

you did earlier in the meeting as far as the, the budget analyst. Or is it the end of the year audit? What you guys, what you were talking about earlier. Tracey, I thought the Comptroller's office and Marc and Amber added a lot. So, if they could do the same thing for the, the upcoming RFP, that'd be great. But I want to get this, this RFP done so we can send it out.

**Chair Bartels:** So yeah, so I would ask that, if you have any suggestions, if you could put them in writing and Comptroller Gallagher, if you could think through in terms of your team, I like the idea of, again, I'm one person, but I like the idea of contemplating sort of a mini study, a mini analysis. It's, it's something that might not take too much of the team's time. It's not a mammoth, and it might not pull, pull away too much time. But it also might give us the sense of, as more than an exercise, is a valuable tool for, you know, for the next phase, I think that's possible. So, if you could contemplate what that would look like, and which, which department, you might, or which titles are, what you might want to endeavor to focus on, in a in a confined sense of time. That would be great as well.

**Comptroller Gallagher:** I'm happy to do so.

**Chair Bartels:** Thank you. And then we'll, we'll gather all this. I will, um, I don't think we're at a place where we can move on anything today. But I will be in short communication with the committee. And we'll probably schedule another meeting in short order in order, in order to move an RFP forward if that's, if that's the way we're going. And I am going to look closely at the last draft that went out though, the RFP that went out for management compensation study, and I would ask, Amber, if you could send it to committee members. And please include Legislator Maloney and Legislator Erner, and Legislator Petit, who's also a co-sponsor, on that distribution list, if you could send that RFP out just so it bumps up to the top of everyone's email, they don't need to necessarily look in the OneDrive and if everyone can commit to looking at that RFP. And thinking about how that might apply to the to the broader organization, if you have comments on that as well. That way we can work on putting together a draft in a in a quick turnaround time. Deputy Executive Rider.

**Deputy Executive Rider:** I know you were talking about the older RFP, but I finally found the OneDrive that the Amber had started the new RFP, right? Like for this year. The other thing is back when we were contemplating this process before, I believe I sent Natalie, both the prior RFP but also the responses that we initially got from that RFP. And if, if I need to, I can go back and look in my emails and try to find that. But if she can look in her emails, I think that has, has all. I think it would be good for everybody. I do, at least see the proposals we received. I think at that time, if I remember, we didn't award through the RFP, because one of the companies withdrew their proposal which left one but right around the same time, we got the Evergreen proposal. And we, we, we said it was timely. Because it was beneficial over the other the other ones. So.

**Chair Bartels:** That's great. And yes, thank you for reminding me. It's been a long day for me too. And thank you to Amber for, for putting in the draft RFP, if you can also include that. If everyone looks at that, it gives us a place to start and actually puts us much further on the path to getting something done. I find that if we have something to look at, to work off of, we're in a much better starting place, than, you know, than, this is very valuable. But, but I think we need, we need to have something to look at. So, Marc, if you, if you send over that information. And also, I just wanted to remind you, again, to get back to us with the information about what Personnel has currently undertaken and where they're at, and the metrics that they're using to do this analysis, that would also be helpful. So again, just let everybody know that we'll be looking to have another meeting probably fairly soon, and I will endeavor to try to schedule it close to another meeting where we're all at. For the time being we'll plan to do zoom in order to expedite as well, because I think in terms of scheduling an in-person meeting that would be a little bit harder to accomplish in terms of the latitude of our ability to move quickly. So, is there anything else that anyone wants to discuss on, on this subject today or anything else that's important that we bring up at the at the moment on this

front? Okay, and, Amber, I just, because I have multiple screens, are there any other agenda items? I don't have my agenda. We'll, just lost it. Are there any other agenda items that need to be raised today?

**Deputy Clerk Feaster:** No, the only other thing on the agenda was that we have had recent communications from the auditors. So, the TSAC reports are available on OneDrive if you're interested in reviewing them.

**Chair Bartels:** Thank you. Thank you very much. So, is there any other new or old business that anyone would like to raise? Okay, hearing none, I'll entertain a motion for adjournment.

**Legislator Walter:** I move we adjourn.

**Legislator Gavaris:** Second.

**Chair Bartels:** Okay. Thank you. All in favor of adjournment.

**Group:** Aye.

**Chair Bartels:** All right. Unanimous. Thank you all very much for the time and for bring your expertise and your open minds. Good night.

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**Time:** 7:41 pm

**Respectfully submitted:** Amber Feaster

**Minutes Approved:** June 8, 2022