

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**DELAWARE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**LOCAL LAW INTRO. NOS. 3 THROUGH 14 OF 2021  
SALARY INCREASES DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICERS**

**NOVEMBER 10, 2021**

The Delaware County Board of Supervisors held a Public Hearing regarding Local Law Intro. Nos. 3 through 14 of 2021 for salary increases of Delaware County Officers in the Board of Supervisors' Room of the Senator Charles D. Cook County Office Building, 111 Main Street, Delhi, New York, and via Zoom at 1:03 p.m. on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, Chairman Tina B. Molé presiding.

Chairman Molé called the hearing to order and read the notice of public hearing.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**LOCAL LAW INTRO. NOS. 3 THROUGH 14 OF 2021  
SALARIES INCREASE DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICERS**

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Delaware County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, November 10, 2021 at 1:05 p.m. in the Supervisors' Room of the Senator Charles D. Cook County Office Building, 111 Main Street, Delhi, New York, concerning proposed Local Laws as follows:

Introductory No. 3 to set the salary of Stephen Hood, Director of Emergency Services at \$67,040 per annum; No. 4 to set the salary of Joseph deMauro, Director of Information Technology at \$ 87,966 per annum; No. 5 to set the salary of Susan McIntyre, Commissioner of Public Works at \$101,070 per annum; No. 6 to set the salary of Judith Garrison, Election Commissioner at \$25,546 per annum; No. 7 to set the salary of Amanda Walsh, Public Health Director at \$95,703 per annum; No. 8 to set the salary of Sherri Falcone, Director of Real Property Tax Services II at \$65,471 per annum; No. 9 to set the salary of Sylvia Armanno, Commissioner of Social Services at \$99,512 per annum; No. 10 to set the salary of Linda Pinner, Personnel Officer at \$78,039 per annum; No. 11 to set the salary of Charles Piper, Director of Veterans Services Agency at \$52,758 per annum; No. 12 to set the salary of Shelly Johnson-Bennett, County Planning Director at \$87,671 per annum; No. 13 to set the salary of Terri Whitney, Director Office of the Aging at \$75,418 per annum; No. 14 to set the salary of Joseph Ermeti, Public Defender at \$140,000 per annum.

All persons interested in speaking concerning the proposed Local Laws may attend the hearing via Zoom as there is very limited seating available due to social distancing requirements. The link will be provided on the County website at: [www.co.delaware.ny.us](http://www.co.delaware.ny.us) or by calling the office of the Clerk of the Board at (607) 832-5110. To ensure that your comments are heard,

they will also be accepted by email until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 8, 2021 to:  
[christa.schafer@co.delaware.ny.us](mailto:christa.schafer@co.delaware.ny.us)

Dated: November 3, 2021

Christa M. Schafer  
Clerk of the Board  
Delaware County Board of Supervisors

Chairman Molé stated an attendance sheet was being passed around for attendees to sign in. She asked those wishing to speak to please stand and give their full name and the town they are from.

Manly E. Shults of Delhi said he appreciates being here and said he has spoken with some Supervisors regarding his views primarily on the \$10,000 bonuses acknowledging that most are not too happy with his views. It is interesting to him that some squeaky wheels from the department heads complained and got the attention of the Supervisors because unionized employees were eligible to get overtime. In many cases, these same department heads make twice the wages of their subsidiaries. This resolution makes them eligible for a one-time \$10,000 bonus. They also get a \$1,200 stipend due to the unionized contract this year. Next year he believes they will be getting a 2% increase. At \$90,000 a year, 2% is another \$1,800 compared to 2% of \$40,000, the amount he does not believe to be the average County salary. There is a considerable difference there for the cost of living on a regular basis. This continues to widen the gap between the high paid and the lower paid employees. At the grocery store, groceries cost the same for you, me, the poor, as well as for the \$90,000 employees. Life necessities such as gas, heating fuel, etc. are all the same, yet, the people who pay the most for these are the poor. Some present may not remember what it's like to be poor but he does remember.

He stated this money supposedly was meant for small businesses and mom and pop stores although the government did leave some loopholes. The funding was also meant for the poor as well as farmers who are suffering as much as everybody else. It was meant for infrastructure such as transportation for senior citizens, towers and communication systems, and road repairs. He can attest that there are places within the county that do need some road repairs. This money could have been used very well; this is \$300,000 for your edification.

The ones who are doing the complaining were lucky enough to draw a good salary. They have the privilege to get a regular paycheck. He questioned where the money comes from so they can get a paycheck and remarked the money comes from small businesses which were closed down and from the landlords who were not able to collect rents. Not only could they not collect their rents, they are not able to evict the tenants. Some of these people are receiving assistance but landlords still are not able to evict them. They could not get the courts to help them. These laws are written by employees of the regular public. The mom and pop stores and landlords who have to have this for their retirement and you're putting them out of business. Sooner or later the host dies and when the host dies, so does the parasite. If that is where you want to go with this, he has a problem with it. Landlords and small businesses still have to pay their taxes or if they have mortgages, they still have to pay them. Sooner or later the buck stops

and some will be put out of business. Farmers suffered because school programs were interrupted. They also suffered because transportation faltered getting supplies to the farms and getting products out of their places. Farmers in particular could have used a bonus. He grew up on a farm and it would have been nice to receive some type of bonus. The same could go for small businesses also.

He opined that we are on our way to the system that Europe has and what has happened to Venezuela called socialism. Venezuela has gone to the next step with it. He has heard that inflation is running from seven to eight percent. That's a regressive tax that hurts the poor hard working families and asked if that is fair? He said this bonus is given to the highest paid employees and look at what the lower ones get—is that fair? The impression he gets is that some don't care. By the same token, if this offends some, then he is sorry.

He urged the Supervisors to vote no. The county needs the money. You have many projects going on like Mental Health, the Highway Department and Office for the Aging—you need money there. Otherwise, the county will need to bond and you have bonded quite a bit. Again, how far into the future are we going to indebt your progeny or to clarify it, your grandchildren. He thanked the board for their time.

Gay Merrill from the Town of Hamden thanked the Board for their time and attention. She said she does try to follow the Board but she was not aware of this \$10,000 bonus until she read about it in the newspaper. There wasn't a lot of information about it. It wasn't posted on the website because it apparently came in the minutes of the last meeting which have not yet been approved. She believes it would be important, almost as a cultural, moral issue, to start on common ground. She knows lots of people around the county and in the room and she believes the people in the room have a pretty good handle. When you think about it, in the last few days, weeks, and months, how many incidental conversations have you had with people saying they wonder where this country is going? Where are the morals? Where are the values? She said two terms came to her mind. One is ethics and one is morality. Ethics has to do with defining what is a rule or law. Morality is what you do and doing the right thing. You can have something that is ethical but not necessarily the best thing in the world to do.

When she asked around about this \$10,000, one of the answers she received was "it's allowed." She opined that just because it's allowed doesn't mean it is the best thing to do. She noted there are a lot of folks in Delaware County that are poor. We are troubled with mental health problems, a huge rate of suicides with adolescents, and the drug situation is bad. She knows of four overdoses in the last week that were not reported to the authorities. Businesses are going down. This \$10,000 is roughly equal to half the median income of our population. It means something to the folks who are your constituents. She asked the Supervisors to think as they are driving home or driving here on the path they take, if they would stop at those houses and ask, "by the way, what do you think about this?" She believes Supervisors would find some folks are kind of shocked about it.

She reported that she has had a number of jobs and noted that when you're in a management position, one of the terms of employment is you get the job done. You're salaried; you are not entitled to overtime. There are certain leniencies—you can take some time off, you can fiddle with your schedule, you don't get protection from the union, but that's the deal of the job.

She feels great compassion for the department heads. They have to work hard, but that's their job. She noted that as long as she has lived in Delaware County, which is a long time, when the going gets tough, the tough get going and we all help each other out.

She believes it is great for the County to recognize department heads for the hard work they did through this pandemic and will continue to do. But just because you can do it, does not necessarily mean it is the right thing to do. Look at the perception of your constituents, those who you represent regarding how they feel about this kind of expenditure. She thanked the Board.

Chairman Molé called for comments from Zoom attendees.

Dottie Howe of Hamden thanked the Board for allowing her to speak. She stated that salaries of some of the County employees are inflated with respect to Otsego and Chenango Counties, which have higher populations, and she said Supervisors should ask themselves why because we don't have many services here in Delaware County. She is not just referring to a bonus, she feels the same about the yearly raises because as you know, the more money they make, the larger their retirement gets and they have great retirement plans.

She stated she wrote to the Board a while ago in regards to some pretty suspicious billing with a significant amount of profits to Delaware County. She said she hopes the Board is looking into that. The bottom line is people are killing themselves at an alarming rate, overdosing, there's no daycare for people to work, and businesses are going under. We need to build a foundation if you want to keep those people in those high positions.

She asked the Supervisors that when they are voting on this to please be mindful of the neighbors they live next to, not the people they are sitting in the meeting with. She thanked the Supervisors.

Since no one else wished to speak, Chairman Molé declared the hearing adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Written comments received are listed below as part of this official record.

Brian Sweeney, Deputy Supervisor of the Middletown Town Board by email dated November 5, 2021. The below resolution was passed unanimously at the Middletown Town Board's November 3, 2021 meeting. The vote was 4-0, with Chris Dabritz absent. We are requesting that this resolution be entered into the record for the public hearing regarding the proposed "bonus pay" for department heads.

Be it Resolved that the Middletown Town Board requests that the Delaware County Board of Supervisors vote NO on the proposal to provide Department Heads with substantial bonus payments for their work during the pandemic.

While we acknowledge that many people put in considerable extra work, the same can be said about countless Delaware County residents. Many people have lost their lives, been stricken with illness, lost their homes and their jobs as a result of the pandemic. The suffering has been well documented.

The median per capita income for Delaware County residents is about \$27,000 annually. While we respect the work done by these individuals, providing county department heads with extra pay of up to \$10,000 each is an inappropriate use of funds and insult to our residents who have worked through the same conditions, with no additional compensation. We request that the supervisors vote no on this proposal.