

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

Legislator Jason J. Kovacs offers the following:

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Ulster County has maintained an unnecessarily high fund balance, a portion of which the Ulster County Legislature finds should be re-allocated to support local EMS services. For example, the Ulster County Comptroller released a report on or about October 31, 2024 finding that "at the close of 2023, the County was \$31.1 million over the fund balance threshold for the General Fund based on limits established by the Ulster County Legislature", that over "the past three years, the County's operating surplus was \$136.4 million higher than planned" and that the "Comptroller's Office and the proposed 2025 Executive Operating Budget anticipate additional surplus from 2024 that will add to overall Fund Balance." Further, the Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Budget describes that Fund Balance as the "money left over in a fund after all expenses have been paid. It's like the County's savings account for a particular fund. If there is extra money, it can be used for future projects or kept as a safety net for emergencies"; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate from a public safety, fiscal management and budget operations perspective to utilize unassigned funds in Ulster County's Fund Balance to support local EMS-related purposes; and

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

RESOLVED, that it is the Policy of Ulster County to fund, facilitate, perpetuate and support the augmentation and operation of local emergency medical services (EMS) in and for the County of Ulster from unassigned funds in Ulster County's Fund Balance in an amount not to exceed five million dollars per annum (the annual local EMS Fund), and be it further

RESOLVED, that the annual local EMS Fund shall be allocated annually according to a formula allocating 50% of the funds based on each Town's and the City's population as determined by the most recent decennial U.S. Census, and 50% based on the Town's and the City's total assessed property value as reported by the Ulster County Department of Finance; and be it further

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

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

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

RESOLVED, that any such contract or intermunicipal agreement in furtherance of this Policy shall contain procedures for Towns and the City of Kingston to document the use of these funds to ensure accountability and transparency, including but not limited to the requirement that the participating Towns and the City of Kingston shall submit an annual report to the Ulster County Legislature detailing the use of funds and the impact on EMS services,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Financial Impact: \$5,000,000 from unassigned funds - Ulster County Fund Balance