



County of Onondaga
Office of the County Executive

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County Executive

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Media Release

For Immediate Release: 1.25.2018

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Comptroller Overspends 2017 Budget

Onondaga County Comptroller Antonacci Projected to End 2017 in the Red

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – County Executive Joanie Mahoney and her administration have worked diligently to reduce the size and cost of County government. As a result, there are approximately 3000 employees today, down from 4224 in 2008.

Working in partnership with the County Legislature, the County has modernized government, consolidated departments, cut positions and now delivers services more efficiently than ever. Every County department has been affected whether operated by a department head or a separately elected official.

In the 2017 budget, County Executive Mahoney proposed that salaries be reduced by approximately \$8 million county-wide, including \$417,008 cuts to the District Attorney, \$1,057,024 cuts to the Sheriff, \$129,338 cuts to the County Clerk and \$479,212 cuts to the Comptroller. The remaining \$6 million in salary reductions came from the County Executive's departments.

After much criticism by the Comptroller, the County Legislature added an additional \$326,983 to the Comptroller's budget for him to spend on salaries. Despite the spending increase, the Comptroller is still projected to overspend his salary budget by approximately \$113,000 as a result of hiring 4 new staff members for which he knew he lacked funding. As a matter of fact, representatives of the Comptroller's Office have admitted on the record, on multiple occasions that they knew the comptroller lacked the funding and still went forward with the new hires.

As required by the Onondaga County Administrative Code, the Comptroller was notified in writing on December 30th, 2016 that even before 2017 started, as a result of hiring new staff, he was projected to exceed his budget by hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Comptroller was asked for an updated staffing plan and failed to respond. Several additional requests were made to the Comptroller to address

his over-spending and he failed to respond every single time. Every department head has expressed at one point or another that they would like more money. The County Legislature has cut the County Executive's budget every year and while we don't always like it, we have an obligation to the taxpayers to live within the budget we are given. The exception to the rule has been the Comptroller's Office. Comptroller Antonacci, the self-proclaimed 'fiscal watchdog', has shown either an inability to manage his office within budget or a complete disregard for the taxpayers who fund his operations.

The Comptroller's shortfall will now have to be covered with the use of more taxpayer money.

County Executive Joanie Mahoney said, "We take seriously our role as fiscal stewards of taxpayers' dollars and work diligently to live within the budget passed every year by the County Legislature. We are responsible for operating the entire government within the dollars we are appropriated. We pave roads, plow snow and provide social services and a world-class parks system among many other functions. The Comptroller has only one job – manage his office within a balanced budget – and he has failed. He owes the hardworking taxpayers an explanation for why he would hire several new employees when he knew full well that he lacked the funds to pay them." Mahoney continued, "The Comptroller points out that he is a Certified Public Accountant and as such, he should understand how to read a budget. As a public servant, he should respect the taxpayers enough to live within that budget."

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