



# **Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Public Hearing**

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 4:30PM  
40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa, NY

## **Minutes**

Roll call was taken

PRESENT –Philip C. Barrett, Eric Butler, Eric Connolly, Joseph Grasso, Mark Hammond, Edward D. Kinowski, Theodore Kusnierz, John Lant, Scott Ostrander, Willard Peck, Jean Raymond, Kevin Tollisen, Kevin Veitch, Matthew E. Veitch – 14.

ABSENT – Diana Edwards, Tara Gaston, John Lawler, Ian Murray, Thomas Richardson, Jonathon Schopf, Michael Smith, Sandra Winney, Arthur M. Wright – 9.

Chairman Kusnierz called the public hearing on the Tentative 2024 Saratoga County Budget, as revised by the Board of Supervisors on November 13, 2023 to order at 4:30pm.

Chairman Kusnierz asked the Clerk to read the notice of public hearing.

Chairman Kusnierz asked if there were any requests to speak.

### **Chris Greive – Saratoga County PBA**

My name is Chris Greive, and I'm here today not only as a resident, but as a representative in Saratoga County Sheriff's Office. I'm here to speak with you all to address a staffing crisis that our agency is facing. And let me be clear with my words here, this is not a crisis. This is a disaster. Our agency is responsible for providing service over 238,000 residents spanning 844 square miles. For transparency an adequately staffed road patrol consists of roughly 89 deputies. We're currently operating with 48. Numbers say that we're 41 people short as I stand here and talk to you today. The shortage directly impacts not just the amount of service we're able to provide, but the quality of service we're able to provide. Short staffing leads to several things slower response to emergencies, mandated overtime, and more dangerous working conditions for our members. Some may ask what the cause for this is. And the answer is simple, fair compensation that not only attracts new officers but makes current officers want to stay. The Sheriff's office is currently the lowest paid agency in our own County. Our agency has exceeded 100,000 calls for service this year. For reference, estimates say that Saratoga Springs, Warren County and Cities like Guilderland, average about 20,000. A five year deputy with us makes about \$72,000. And the average home price in this county is about \$365,000. Simple math says we can't live in the county that we work. Let's go back to the 100,000 number. Warren County, our neighbors to the north. They average about 23,000 calls a year and that's listed on their website. A five year deputy of that agency makes \$88,000 a year and the average home price is valued at \$260,000. They handle

80,000 less calls make \$16,000 a year more than we do, and their cost of living is about \$100,000 cheaper. We have members that can't afford rent because it costs more than what they make in a two week period. We have a list of numbers compiled that's been shared with you all that we'd be happy to talk about if you'd be willing to give us a chance. To put it bluntly, we are incredibly underpaid for the work that we do. The holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and weekends that we miss. We have great cops, people who love doing this job. But we're losing them because the money doesn't support them. And the mandated overtime is taking them from our families. Year to date, the members, out members of work 2,205 shifts of overtime. For clarification that's 17,640 hours away from our families. This used to be a place people would retire from, now they're using us as a stepping stone to go other places. We need your help and we need to quickly. On behalf of the members of our agency and our residents in the county. I'm asking you to consider reviewing a compensation package for us that makes this crisis go away. Since signing our contract, we've lost 15 to retirement, another four scheduled and six have transferred out because there's no incentive to stay. I promise I am on my last sentence. We are continuously overworked and underpaid, there's no insight and increase in salary and compensation package will not solve all of our problems our agency. However, we need to entice officers to come here and stay with us. We need your help now more than ever. Thank you.

**Issac Pulver - Greenfield**

Good afternoon Supervisors. I am a resident of Greenfield. I'm here as the Director of the Saratoga Springs Public Library, which is a member of the Southern Adirondack Library system, and I'm here to express my gratitude on behalf of the libraries in Saratoga County for your restoration of funding to the Southern Adirondack Library system that helps to support our ability to provide access to eBooks, downloadable audios, e-magazines, which is a service which has grown exponentially as has the cost to provide it. The \$35,000 that you have restored to the budget this year is a drop in the bucket for what it costs for us to provide the service but like I said, I'm just here to express my gratitude on behalf of the libraries, the library system, and the readers and users of the service. So thank you.

Chairman Kusnierz asked if any written communications were received.

Mrs. Connolly said there was one email from the PBA as referenced by Mr. Grieve. Chairman Kusnierz stated that the email would be included as part of the record and is attached to these minutes.

Chairman Kusnierz closed the public hearing at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Clerk of the Board



## Saratoga County Deputy Sheriff's Police Benevolent Association

*"Proudly representing the frontline men and women of the  
Saratoga County Sheriff's Office Road Patrol."*

*Ryan Mahan*  
President

*Mark Talmadge*  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

*Daniel Yetto*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President



Board members and residents of the County, my name is Chris Greive and I'm here today not just as a resident, but as a representative for the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office.

I'm here to speak with you all today to address a staffing crisis that our agency is facing. Let me be clear with my words; this is not a crisis, this is a disaster. Our agency is responsible for providing service to over 238,000 residents, spanning 844 square miles. For transparency, an adequately staffed road patrol would include roughly 89 deputies. We currently operate with 48. Numbers say we're understaffed by 41 people as I stand here today. The shortage directly impacts not just the amount of service we are able to provide, but the quality of service we are able to provide. Short staffing leads to several things: slower response times to emergencies, mandated overtime, and more dangerous working conditions for our members.

Some may ask what the cause for this is, and the answer is simple – fair compensation that not only attracts new officers, but also makes current officers want to stay. The Sheriff's Office is currently the lowest paid agency in our own county. Our agency has exceeded 100,000 calls for service this year. For reference, estimates say Saratoga Springs, Warren County, and Cities like Guilderland average around 20,000 calls. A 5-year Deputy with us makes around \$72,000. The average home price in the county is roughly \$365,000. Simple math says we can't live in the county where we work.

Let's go back to the 100,000 number. Warren County, our neighbor to the north, handles approximately 23,000 calls a yr. That's listed on their website. A 5-year deputy for that agency makes \$88,000/yr. The average home price is estimated at \$260,000. They handle 80,000 less calls, make \$16,000 a year more and have a cost of living that is \$100,000 cheaper. We have members that can't afford rent because it costs more than what they make in a 2-week period.

We have a list of numbers compiled that show comparisons to other agencies in the capital district that we would be happy to share with you if you would be willing to work with us. To put it bluntly, we are incredibly underpaid for the work that we do, the holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and weekends that we miss.

We have great cops. People who love doing this job. But we're losing them because the money doesn't support them, and the mandated overtime is taking them from their families. Year to date, our members have worked 2,205 shifts of overtime. For clarification, that's 17,640 hours away from our families.

This used to be a place people would retire from. Now, we're a stepping stone to go other places. We need your help, and we need it quickly. On behalf of the members of our agency and our residents, I am asking you to please consider reviewing a compensation package for us that makes this crisis go away. Since signing this contract, we have lost 15 to retirement, another 4 scheduled and 6 transfers because there is no incentive to stay here. We are continuously over-worked and under-paid with no end in sight. An increase in salary and compensation package will not solve all of our problems we are facing as an agency; however, we need to entice officers to want join us instead of deterring them. We need your help now more than ever.





## Saratoga County Deputy Sheriff's Police Benevolent Association

*"Proudly representing the frontline men and women of the  
Saratoga County Sheriff's Office Road Patrol."*

Ryan Mahan  
President

Mark Talmadge  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Daniel Yetto  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President



Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

We write to bring attention to the pressing staffing crisis at the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office. Currently, the Sheriff's Office is budgeted to have approximately 140 sworn officers, operates with only 117 members, yet only 50 deputies are assigned to the Road Patrol Division, responsible for the safety of over 238,000 residents.

The Road Patrol Division, spread across day, afternoon, and midnight shifts, is unable to meet the "minimum" staffing requirements to ensure a safe working environment. Compounded by contractual town patrol positions, the shortage affects regular coverage across the county's vast expanse. The shortage forces reliance on voluntary and non-voluntary overtime to meet minimum daily responsibilities, which includes responding to emergencies, paperwork, area checks, and inmate transports. This shortage jeopardizes community safety.

The Sheriff's Office has received nearly 100,000 calls for service so far this year; this is equivalent to a more than a full year's workload that has accumulated within the first eleven months' time. As the population grows, so do the responsibilities and requests for police services.

The root cause of this crisis is the inadequate compensation, driving experienced officers to seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere. Competitive salaries are crucial in attracting and retaining skilled law enforcement professionals.

We urge immediate action on three key points:

- 1. Salary Review and Adjustment:** Initiate an immediate review of the salary structure within the Sheriff's Office, comparing it with surrounding jurisdictions and industry standards. Adjustments must be made to ensure that our officers are fairly compensated for their invaluable service.
- 2. Long-Term Commitment:** Develop a sustainable plan to keep the salaries competitive in the long term, not only to attract new recruits but also to reward and retain the experienced and dedicated officers already serving our community.
- 3. Collaboration and Funding Allocation:** Collaborate with the Sheriff's Office to understand their specific needs and allocate the necessary funds to ensure that competitive salaries become a priority.

We would like to acknowledge Sheriff Zurlo's commitment to the well-being of his deputies and his support for efforts made by the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) to increase their salaries. Recognizing the invaluable role law enforcement plays in maintaining public safety, Sheriff Zurlo's endorsement of these initiatives underscores the importance of addressing the staffing crisis promptly and effectively. We trust that with your collaboration and leadership, positive changes can be implemented to ensure the continued excellence of the Saratoga County Sheriff's Office in serving and protecting our community.

Respectfully,

Ryan Mahan, President

Saratoga County Deputy Sheriff's PBA

Current Pay Scale

DEPUTY	BASE					5 Yr Salary	7 Yr Salary									
		1	2	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25
2022	56360	63421	66193	67379	71034	72204	75805	76973	79727	80159	80591	81023	81455	81887	82319	82751
2023(0%)	56360	63421	66193	67379	71034	72204	75805	76973	79727	80159	80591	81023	81455	81887	82319	82751
2024(0%)	56360	63421	66193	67379	71034	72204	75805	76973	79727	80159	80591	81023	81455	81887	82319	82751
2025(1%)	56924	64055	66855	68053	71744	72926	76563	77743	80524	80956	81388	81820	82252	82684	83116	83548
2026(1.5%)	57778	65016	67858	69074	72820	74020	77711	78909	81732	82164	82596	83028	83460	83892	84324	84756
2027(2%)	58934	66316	69215	70455	74276	75500	79265	80487	83367	83799	84231	84663	85095	85527	85959	86391

Current Pay Scale +\$10,000 per Step

DEPUTY	BASE					5 Yr Salary	7 Yr Salary									
		1	2	3	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25
2022	56360	73421	76193	77379	81034	82204	85805	86973	89727	90159	90591	91023	91455	91887	92319	92751
2023(0%)	56360	73421	76193	77379	81034	82204	85805	86973	89727	90159	90591	91023	91455	91887	92319	92751
2024(0%)	56360	73421	76193	77379	81034	82204	85805	86973	89727	90159	90591	91023	91455	91887	92319	92751
2025(1%)	56924	74155	76955	78153	81844	83026	86663	87843	90624	91056	91488	91920	92352	92784	93216	93648
2026(1.5%)	57778	75267	78109	79325	83072	84271	87963	89161	91983	92415	92847	93279	93711	94143	94575	95007
2027(2%)	58934	76772	79671	80912	84733	85956	89722	90944	93823	94255	94687	95119	95551	95983	96415	96847



Current Pay Scale Comparison to Local Agencies

Agency	Median Income	Median Home Value (2023)	5 Year Salary	7 Year Salary	5 Year Salary Difference	7 Year Salary Difference
Saratoga County SO	\$90,800	\$365,000	\$71,304	\$72,204		
Mechanicville PD	\$47,785		\$75,648	\$80,031	(\$4,344)	(\$7,827)
Waterford PD	\$61,891		\$75,016	\$75,516	(\$3,712)	(\$3,312)
Saratoga Springs PD	\$90,020		\$79,731	\$87,462	(\$8,427)	(\$15,258)
Rensselaer County SO	\$83,109	\$232,000	\$71,905	\$81,185	(\$601)	(\$8,981)
Albany County SO	\$77,049	\$260,000	\$71,151	\$86,944	\$153	(\$14,740)
Schenectady County SO	\$74,765	\$215,000	\$73,319	\$73,319	(\$2,015)	(\$1,115)
Warren County SO	\$69,865	\$260,000	\$87,916	\$87,916	(\$16,612)	(\$15,712)
Hamilton County SO***	\$62,841	\$252,500	\$53,946	\$89,831		
Washington County SO	\$93,301	\$184,370	\$69,742	\$69,742	\$1,562	\$2,462
Fulton County SO	\$55,240	\$132,000	\$66,400	\$66,400	\$4,904	\$5,804
Montgomery County SO	\$53,533	\$140,000	\$62,961	\$62,961	\$8,343	\$9,243
Scotia PD	\$63,097		\$76,246	\$85,185	(\$4,942)	(\$12,981)
Glenville PD	\$85,559		\$76,213	\$87,463	(\$4,909)	(\$15,259)
Rotterdam PD*	\$71,789		\$86,520	\$93,417	(\$15,216)	(\$21,213)
Niskayuna PD	\$117,415		\$88,091	\$93,085	(\$16,787)	(\$20,881)
Schenectady PD	\$50,237		\$71,600	\$86,031	(\$296)	(\$13,827)
Colonie PD	\$91,551		\$92,534	\$96,778	(\$21,230)	(\$24,574)
Cohoes PD	\$55,266		\$76,790	\$79,490	(\$5,486)	(\$7,286)
Guilderland PD	\$94,606		\$93,883	\$96,164	(\$22,579)	(\$23,960)
Bethlehem PD	\$108,750		\$79,301	\$91,051	(\$7,997)	(\$18,847)
Menands PD	\$73,281		\$87,006	\$89,606	(\$15,702)	(\$17,402)
Rensselaer PD**	\$66,136		\$73,263	\$73,263	(\$1,959)	(\$1,059)
Troy PD**	\$50,304		\$61,538	\$75,727	\$9,766	(\$4,423)

RED HIGHLIGHT	Salaries greater than Saratoga County SO
GREEN HIGHLIGHT	Salaries less than Saratoga County SO

\*2023 Salary Year

\*\*2021 Salary Year

\*\*\*No Pay Scale available, only base pay/top pay

Source: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/sales/resmedian.htm>

Source: <https://data.census.gov/>



**Current Pay Scale +\$10,000 per Step Comparison to Local Agencies**

Agency	Median Income	Median Home Value	5 Year Salary	7 Year Salary	5 Year Salary Difference	7 Year Salary Difference
Saratoga County SO	\$90,800	\$365,000	\$81,304	\$82,204		
Mechanicville PD	\$47,785		\$75,648	\$80,031	\$5,656	\$2,173
Waterford PD	\$61,891		\$75,016	\$75,516	\$6,288	\$6,688
Saratoga Springs PD	\$90,020		\$79,731	\$87,462	\$1,573	(\$5,258)
Rensselaer County SO	\$83,109	\$232,000	\$71,905	\$81,185	\$9,399	\$1,019
Albany County SO	\$77,049	\$260,000	\$71,151	\$86,944	\$10,153	(\$4,740)
Schenectady County SO	\$74,765	\$215,000	\$73,319	\$73,319	\$2,329	\$6,712
Warren County SO	\$69,865	\$260,000	\$87,916	\$87,916	(\$6,612)	(\$5,712)
Hamilton County SO***	\$62,841	\$252,500	\$53,946	\$89,831		
Washington County SO	\$93,301	\$184,370	\$69,742	\$69,742	\$11,562	\$12,462
Fulton County SO	\$55,240	\$132,000	\$66,400	\$66,400	\$14,904	\$15,804
Montgomery County SO	\$53,533	\$140,000	\$62,961	\$62,961	\$18,343	\$19,243
Scotia PD	\$63,097		\$76,246	\$85,185	\$5,058	(\$2,981)
Glenville PD	\$85,559		\$76,213	\$87,463	\$5,091	(\$5,259)
Rotterdam PD*	\$71,789		\$86,520	\$93,417	(\$5,216)	(\$11,213)
Niskayuna PD	\$117,415		\$88,091	\$93,085	(\$6,787)	(\$10,881)
Schenectady PD	\$50,237		\$83,679	\$86,031	(\$2,375)	(\$3,827)
Colonie PD	\$91,551		\$92,534	\$96,778	(\$11,230)	(\$14,574)
Cohoes PD	\$55,266		\$76,790	\$79,490	\$4,514	\$2,714
Guilderland PD	\$94,606		\$93,883	\$96,164	(\$12,579)	(\$13,960)
Bethlehem PD	\$108,750		\$79,301	\$91,051	\$2,003	(\$8,847)
Menands PD	\$73,281		\$87,006	\$89,606	(\$5,702)	(\$7,402)
Rensselaer PD**	\$66,136		\$73,262	\$73,263	\$8,042	\$8,941
Troy PD**	\$50,304		\$61,538	\$75,727	\$19,766	\$5,577

RED HIGHLIGHT	Salaries greater than Saratoga County SO
GREEN HIGHLIGHT	Salaries less than Saratoga County SO

\*2023 Salary Year

\*\*2021 Salary Year

\*\*\*No Pay Scale available, only base pay/top pay

Source: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/sales/resmedian.htm>

Source: <https://data.census.gov/>