



County of Onondaga
Office of the County Executive

Joanne M. Mahoney

County Executive

ongov.net

Media Release

For Immediate Release: 11.29.16

Contact: Martin Skahen 435-3516

Onondaga County Comptroller Should Immediately Comply with Payroll Processing Audit as Directed by the Onondaga County Legislature

Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney today called upon Comptroller Bob Antonacci to cooperate with an independent audit firm attempting to review County procedures for processing and recording payroll transactions. The proposed audit is in response to comments and recommendations made by the County's outside auditor in a Management Letter dated April 13, 2016.

"The audit firm chosen by the Comptroller's own RFP process wrote a letter identifying concerns with access and security rights in our payroll processing system, while making specific recommendations to reduce the risk of undetected payroll errors" said County Executive Joanie Mahoney. "The person who calls himself 'transparent' and 'the watchdog' used the excuse of his taxpayer funded lawsuit to refuse cooperation with an important accounting review that has been attempted since June. The lawsuit is now over and yet the Comptroller still refuses to comply. His attempts to hide his actions from the public are the exact opposite of the professional standards the rest of the county adheres to and are completely unacceptable."

The Onondaga County Legislature passed a resolution in August requiring the Comptroller to comply with the independent audit of payroll procedures and controls commissioned in response to the Management Letter comments of April 13. To date, the Comptroller continues to refuse to cooperate and in a classic example of political hypocrisy stated, "Pursuing this audit after the Judge's reading of his decision from the bench would be a waste of taxpayer money as the issue has been adjudicated." In fact, the judge was not asked by either party to evaluate the County's payroll controls, which is what the outside auditor is being hired to do. It is completely hypocritical to spend half a million taxpayer dollars on a politically motivated lawsuit and then claim that an independent look into his actions is not worth it. If the Comptroller truly believes his actions were proper then why does he resist an independent review?

In a communication received by the County Executive's office, the independent audit firm expressed the concern that "if we get too far into December we might not be able to complete this project before 12/31/2016 and you would be out of this year's audit period and therefore technically would not have complied with your intent to respond to [the] management letter comments..."

They also added their staff is ready to begin on December 5th. The Comptroller should agree to let their work begin and should provide full cooperation.