



ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER
HON. STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

February 4, 2021

Marie Cannon
Erie County Commissioner of Social Services
95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Commissioner Cannon,

We are inquiring about your request to the Erie County Legislature on the agenda for their February 4, 2021 meeting. The request for a nearly \$18,000 variable minimum is in essence a \$22,387 raise for a political appointee that has not worked in the current position. The compensation for this position for an employee with no county experience, or who has left the employ of Erie County and is seeking to return, would typically be \$71,978, not the \$94,365 sought by this resolution. While the variable minimum request is for almost \$18,000, the true "raise" for this position is actually \$22,387.

Resolution item COMM. 3E-9, titled "Personnel Modification - Dept. of Social Services," asks the Legislature to approve a variable minimum for this political appointee for \$17,979 annually. The Special Assistant to the Commissioner is a Managerial Confidential position, Group 15. With massive budget cuts, hiring freezes and union employees not receiving raises anywhere near this kind of massive increase, the Office of Erie County Comptroller has the following questions about this political position that is about to see a nearly \$22,387 raise if approved by the Legislature:

- Have you identified the individual for the position? If so, who? If not, why is a variable minimum sought?
- Why didn't Social Services conduct open interviews for the job?
- Where can the Office of Erie County Comptroller direct individuals to apply for this position that could pay \$94,365, including a \$22,387 raise even before they begin working?
- Since this position has not been filled since March of last year and has been vacant for what is approaching one full year, why is there a need to fill it now?
- Given the job restrictions placed on departments as part of this year's budget, a \$22,387 raise is troubling. If the position is urgently needed, why was it not filled last year at the height of the pandemic?
- As you are aware it is a felony to use the promise of a taxpayer funded job to secure political favors, such as the promise of providing a job for someone to run for public office. Is it possible that someone in the Poloncarz Administration promised this political position to someone with the intention of having that political appointee run for public office while in this social services position with a \$22,387 raise?

Thank you very much for providing these answers in a timely manner, considering the Legislature is about to approve a significant raise for this soon to be named political appointee.

Sincerely,

Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr.
Erie County Comptroller

CC: Honorable Members, Erie County Legislature

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