



Gizelle J. Meeks
Jefferson County Clerk

Honorable Members of the Jefferson County Legislature
195 Arsenal Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Honorable Colleagues:

I hereby submit the 2020 Annual Report of the Jefferson County Clerk. The duties of the County Clerk are mandated by the New York State Constitution and by federal, state and local law. These duties are carried out by dedicated staff that works diligently to serve the public.

The County Clerk's Office is a state constitutional office that is the main depositor for records created within the county. The County Clerk serves as the Clerk of the Corporation of Jefferson County, as well as a register of mortgages, deeds and all records pertaining to real property within Jefferson County. The County Clerk also serves as clerk of the Supreme and County Courts and is commissioned to not only collect all fees of the courts but to also protect, produce upon request and preserve court records. The County Clerk, in accordance with Vehicle and Traffic Law, acts as an agent for the Commissioner of the New York State Motor Vehicles Department.

The Jefferson County Clerk's Office collects and distributes monies for various state agencies. The county's share of these collections is submitted to the County Treasurer on a monthly basis with a report detailing the collections.

The following pages detail the monies collected by the Jefferson County Clerk's Office and the Department of Motor Vehicle Office that are paid to the County Treasurer and disbursed to different agencies throughout the state.

I would like to thank the County Legislature for their support and look forward to working with you to continue to serve the residents of Jefferson County in the most efficient and productive manner possible.

My office is open to anyone who would like to tour the County Clerk's office, and I am willing to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gizelle J. Meeks
Jefferson County Clerk

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Jefferson County Clerk Organizational Chart



County Clerk



Recording Department



Records Management



Motor Vehicles



Administration



Land Records



Court Records

- Public Service
- Real Estate Recordings
- Mortgage Tax
- DBA's
- Incorporations
- Liens
- Oaths
- Notary Public
- Passports

- Public Service
- Civil Actions
- Criminal Actions
- Judgments
- Court Fines

- Public Service
- Inactive Records Storage
- Records Retention
- Records Disposition
- Digitization
- Historian
- Historical Searches

- Public Service
- Licenses
- Permits
- Registrations
- Enforcement
- Donate Life

- Public Service
- Personnel
- Cash Management
- Financial Reports
- Accounts Receivable/Payable
- Budget
- Manage Senior Staff

Statement of All Funds Collected and Disbursed

Received:

Mortgage Tax	\$ 3,766,017.05
Transfer Tax	\$ 1,724,007.94
NYS ORPS	\$ 525,000.00
Court	\$ 561,941.99
Cultural Education & Records Management	\$ 294,452.94
Notary	\$ 9,220.00
Department of Motor Vehicles	\$ 3,232,768.38
Clerk Fees	\$ 944,725.22
Total Revenue Received:	\$ 11,058,133.52

Disbursed:

Basic Mortgage Tax/Total Town Revenue:	\$ 2,428,398.65
Mortgage Tax Expense	\$ 348,997.83
Transfer Tax Fees	\$ 4,051.00
NYS ORPS Fees	\$ 32,130.00
Court Fees	\$ 49,994.75
DWI Fees	\$ 34,055.00
Cultural Education & Records Management Fees	\$ 14,720.00
Notary Fees	\$ 3,860.00
Department of Motor Vehicles	\$ 598,493.71
Clerk Fees*	\$ 944,725.22
Total County Revenue:	\$ 2,031,027.51
State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA)	\$ 988,620.57
Transfer Tax	\$ 1,719,956.94
NYS Office of Real Property Services	\$ 492,870.00
Court	\$ 477,892.24
Cultural Education	\$ 209,760.51
Records Management	\$ 69,972.43
Notary	\$ 5,360.00
NYS Department of Motor Vehicles	\$ 2,634,274.67
Total New York State Revenue:	\$ 6,598,707.36
Total Revenue Disbursed:	\$ 11,058,133.52

*There are still several Notary and Incorporation Receipts pending from NYS. An approximation of this revenue based on 2019 is \$3,700.00.

Expenses by Sub-Department

1410 - County Clerk Expenses

Personal Services	\$ 282,606.94
Office Expenses	\$ 123,056.26
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$ 226,192.67
Subtotal	\$ 631,855.87

1415 - DMV Expenses

Personal Services	\$ 405,133.78
Office Expenses	\$ 8,725.06
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$ 310,169.19
Subtotal	\$ 724,028.03

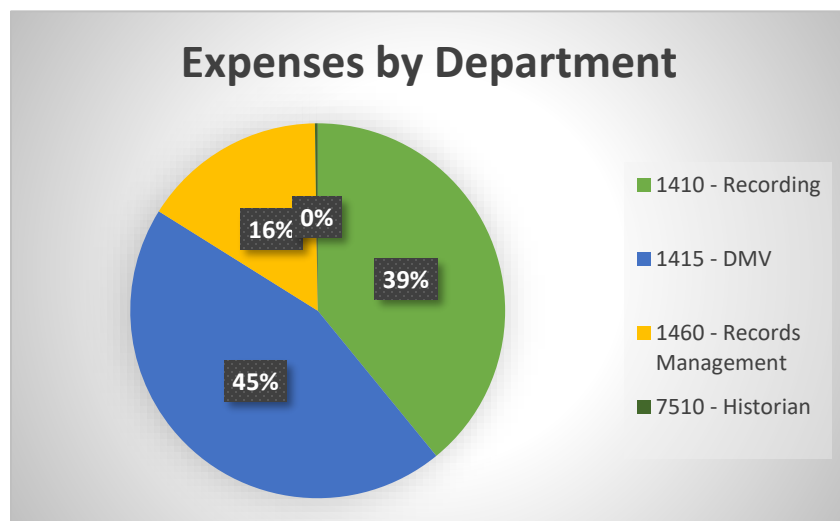
1460 - Records Management Expenses

Personal Services	\$ 144,389.80
Office Expenses	\$ 6,967.14
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$ 104,994.33
Subtotal	\$ 256,351.27

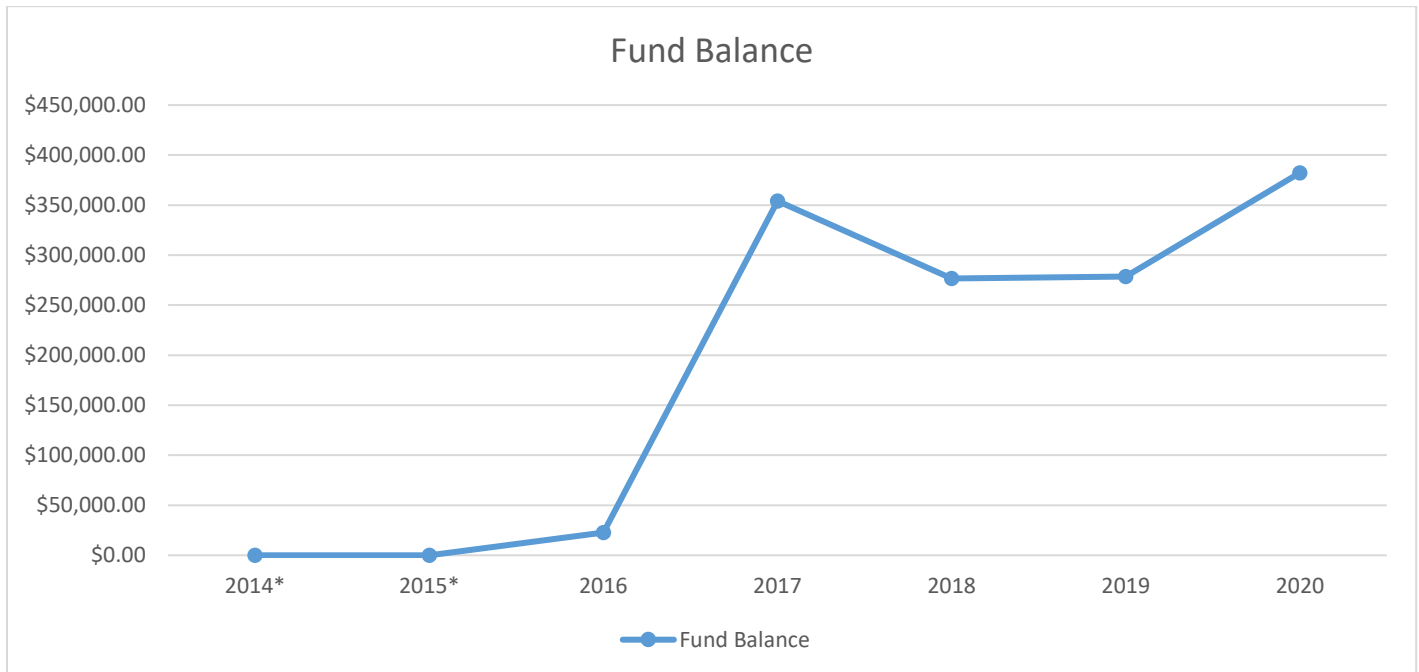
7510 - Historian Expenses

Personal Services	\$ 2,081.09
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$ 1,796.76
Subtotal	\$ 3,877.85

Total County Clerk Expenses 2020	\$ 1,616,113.02
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End of Year Fund Balance 2014-2020



*No Fund Balance in 2014, cost to taxpayers was \$92,177.36.

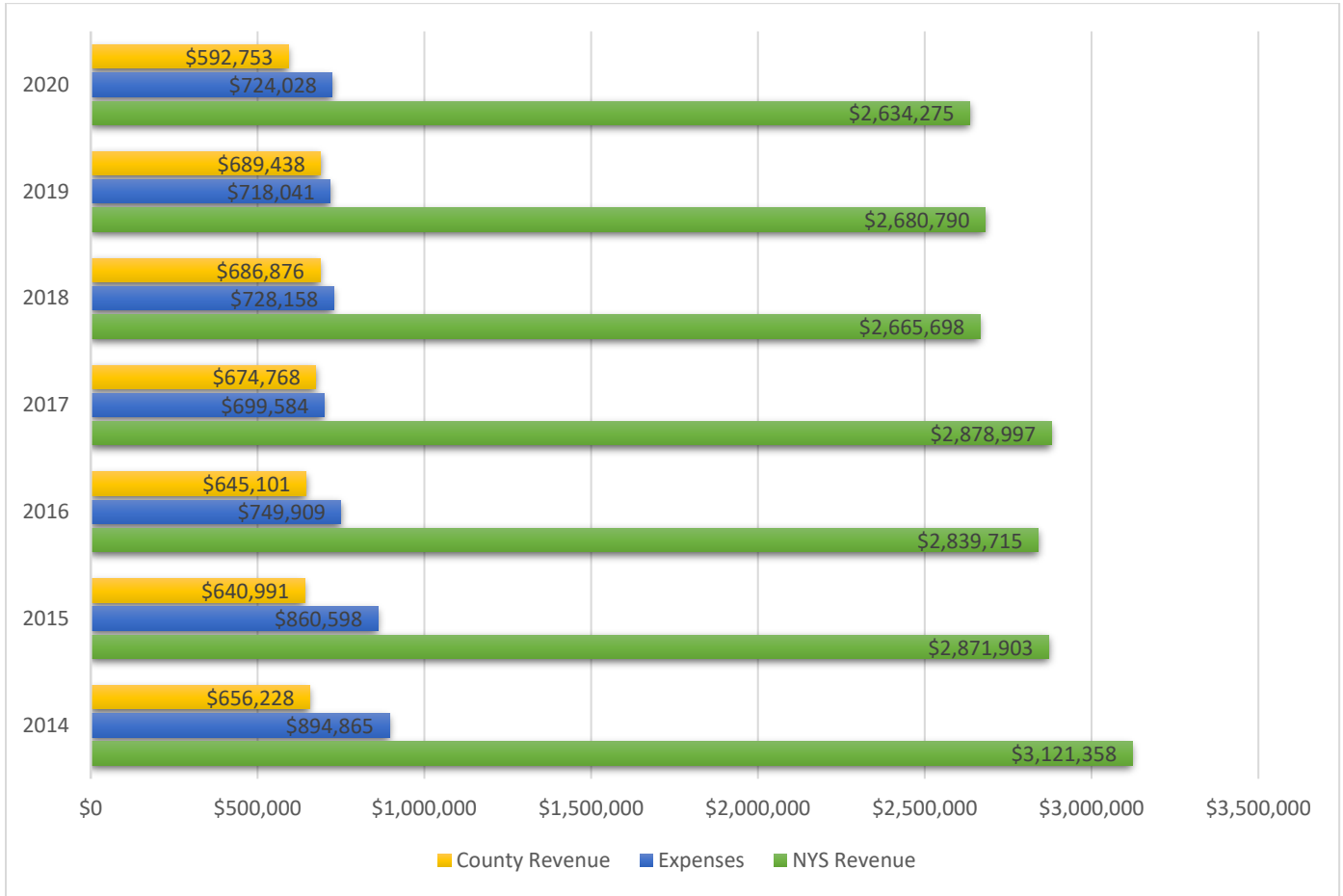
*No Fund Balance in 2015, cost to taxpayers was \$42,333.21.

Fund Balance – General Information

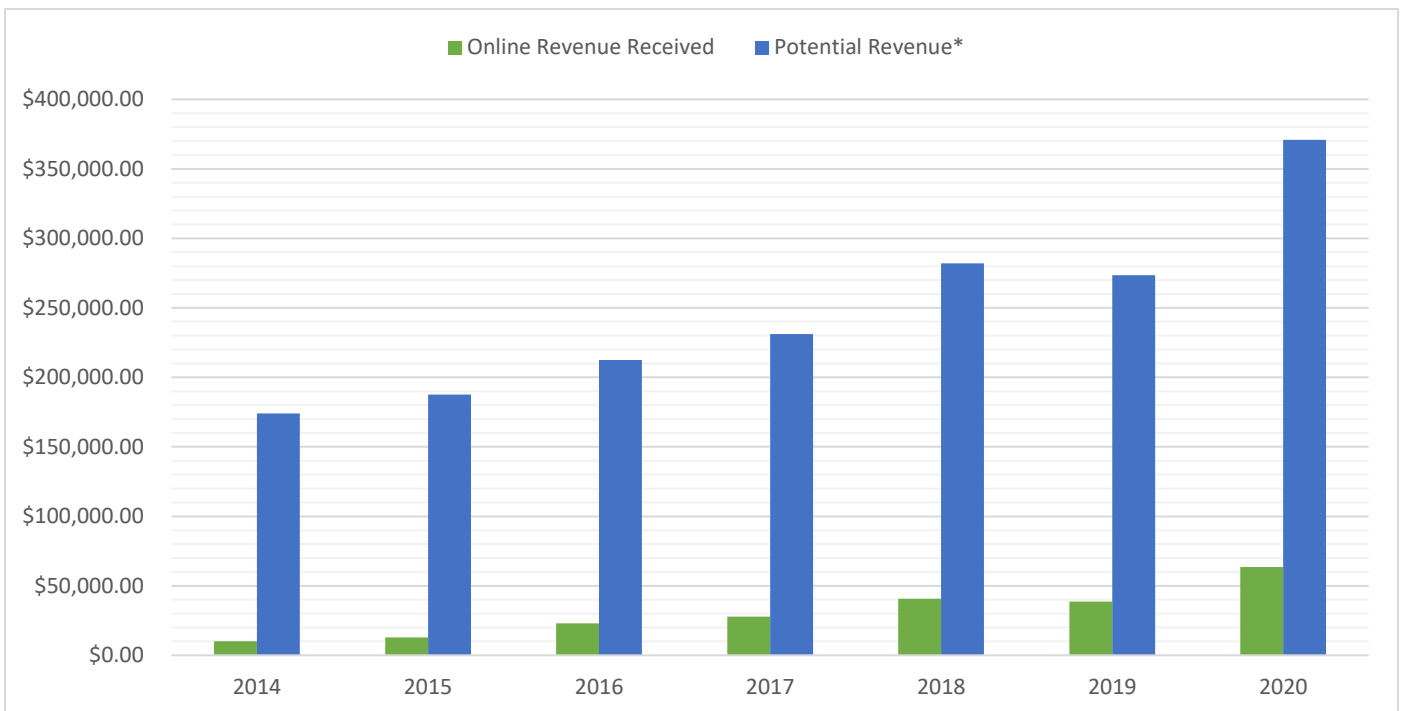
- Since 2014, eight positions have been deleted.
- In 2015, two sub-departments were consolidated resulting in lower overall expenses.
- 2020 has had the highest fund balance with Gizelle Meeks as County Clerk.
 - Contributing factors include:
 - Furloughs
 - Deleted/Vacant Positions
 - Mortgage Rates
 - Downstate DMV Dealer Transactions

Department of Motor Vehicles

Overall Revenues and Expenses 2014-2020:

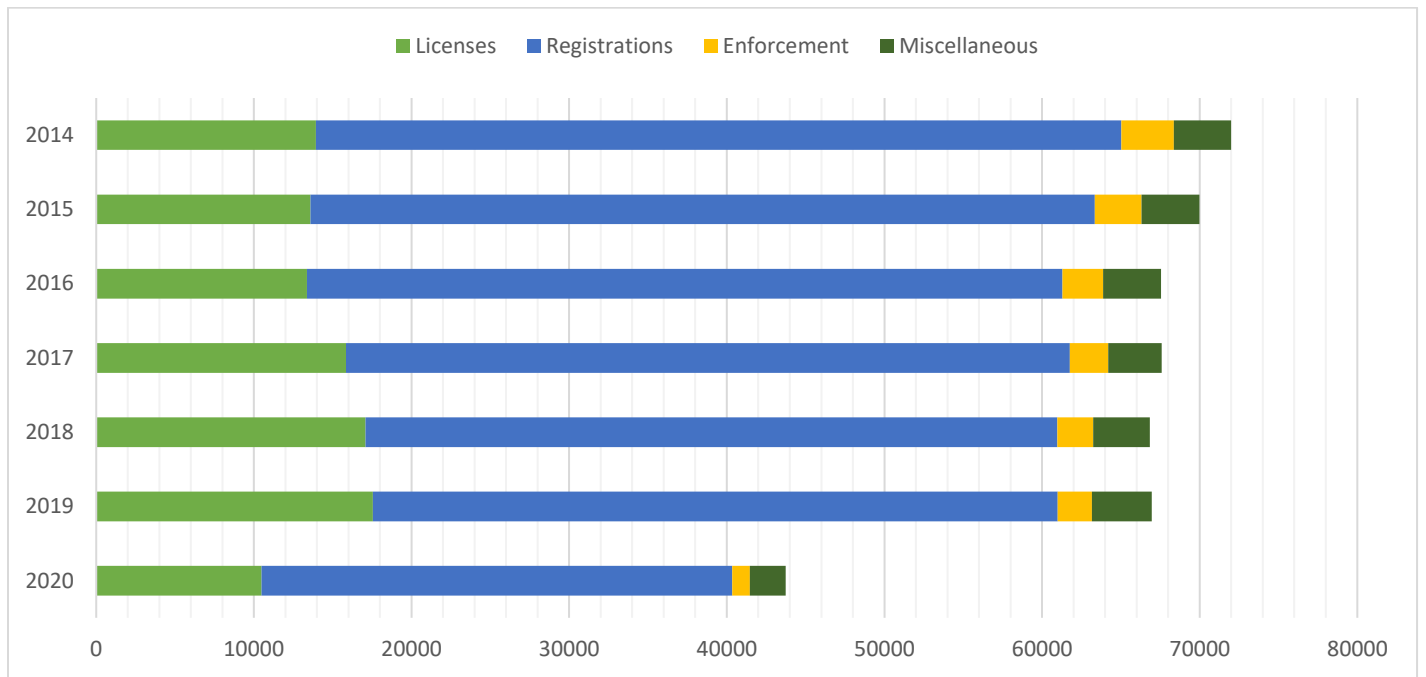


DMV Online Revenue:



*Potential Revenue totals are what Jefferson County would have received if all of the online transactions were processed within the office at a retention rate of 12.7%.

Total Number of DMV Transactions 2014-2020



DMV – General Information

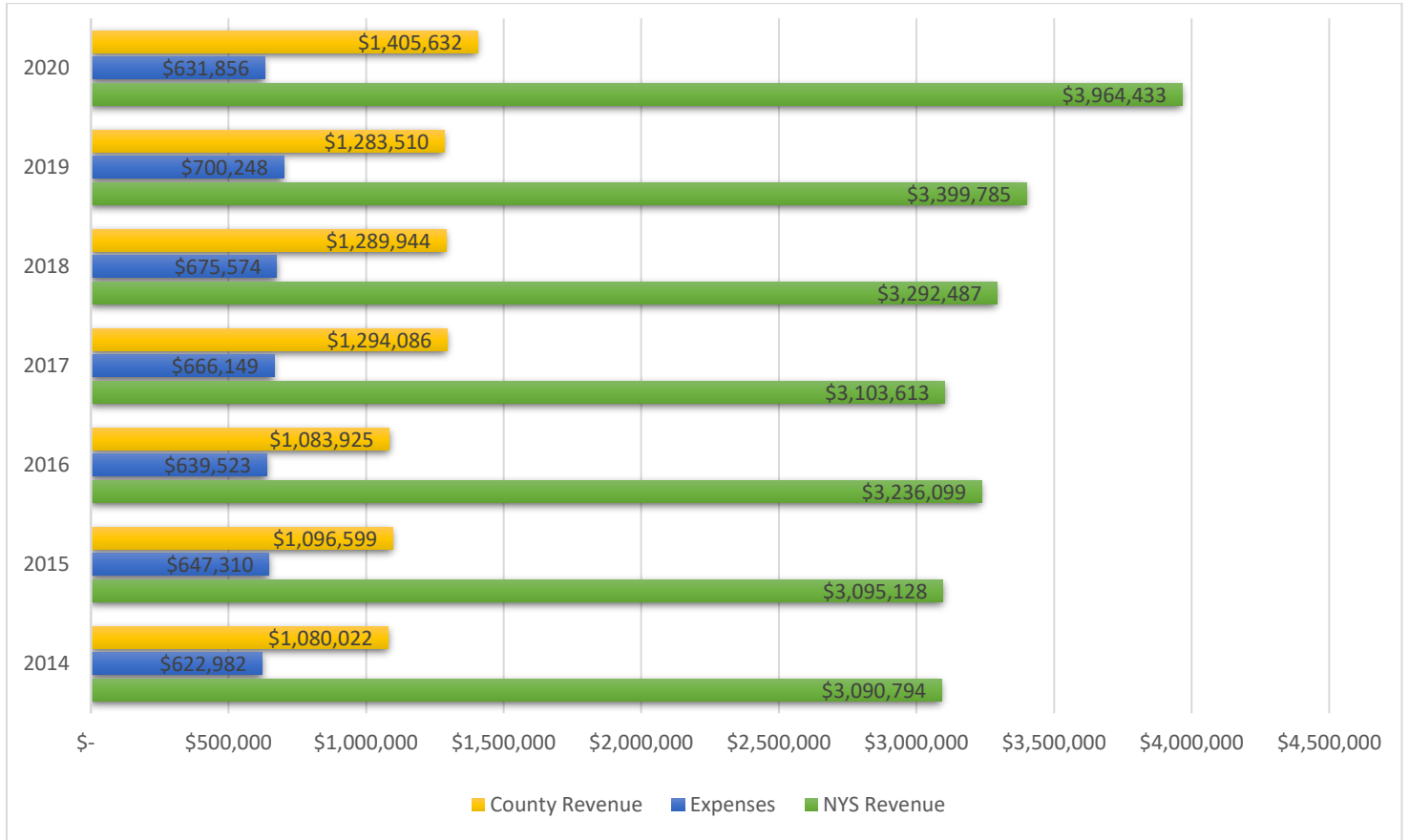
- Jefferson County retains 12.7% of most transactions performed within the office.
- Jefferson County receives 3.25% of online transactions over and above the threshold of \$965,703.75.

DMV – 2020 Highlights

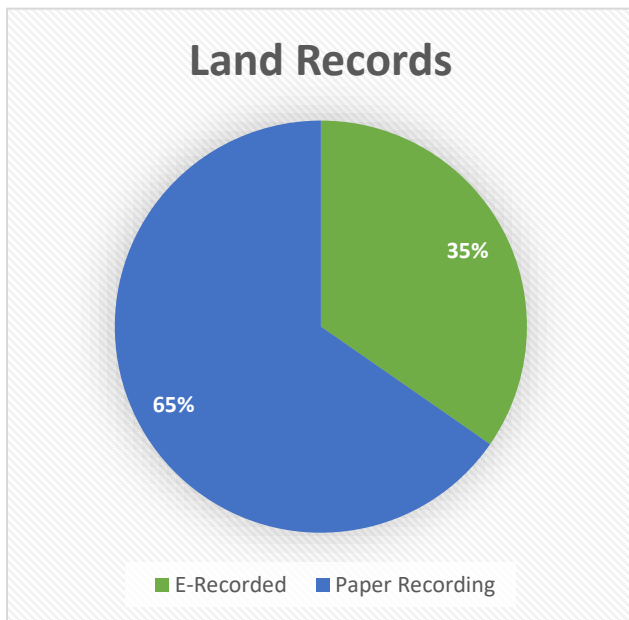
- Revenue is down 14.02% from the previous year.
- Revenue is 9.09% lower than original estimates.
- Revenue from online transactions increased by \$24,913.94 from last year – an increase of 64.54%.
- The total number of transactions processed decreased by 34.7%.
- DMV cost taxpayers \$131,275.05 in 2020.
- NYS DMV is currently requiring all DMV's to operate on an appointment only basis.
- Our Drop Box was re-installed and has been essential to our operation through the pandemic.
- NYS DMV asked for assistance in processing their dealer transactions. Jefferson County received and processed approximately 150 dealer transactions from downstate each month.
- Postage costs have increased substantially as a result of Covid-19.

Recording Department

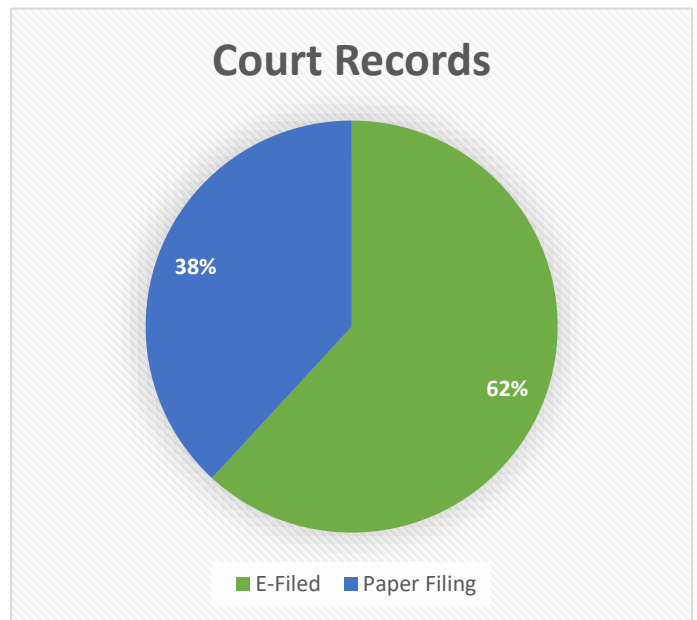
Overall Revenues and Expenses 2014-2020



Percentage of Total Documents Recorded or Filed Electronically

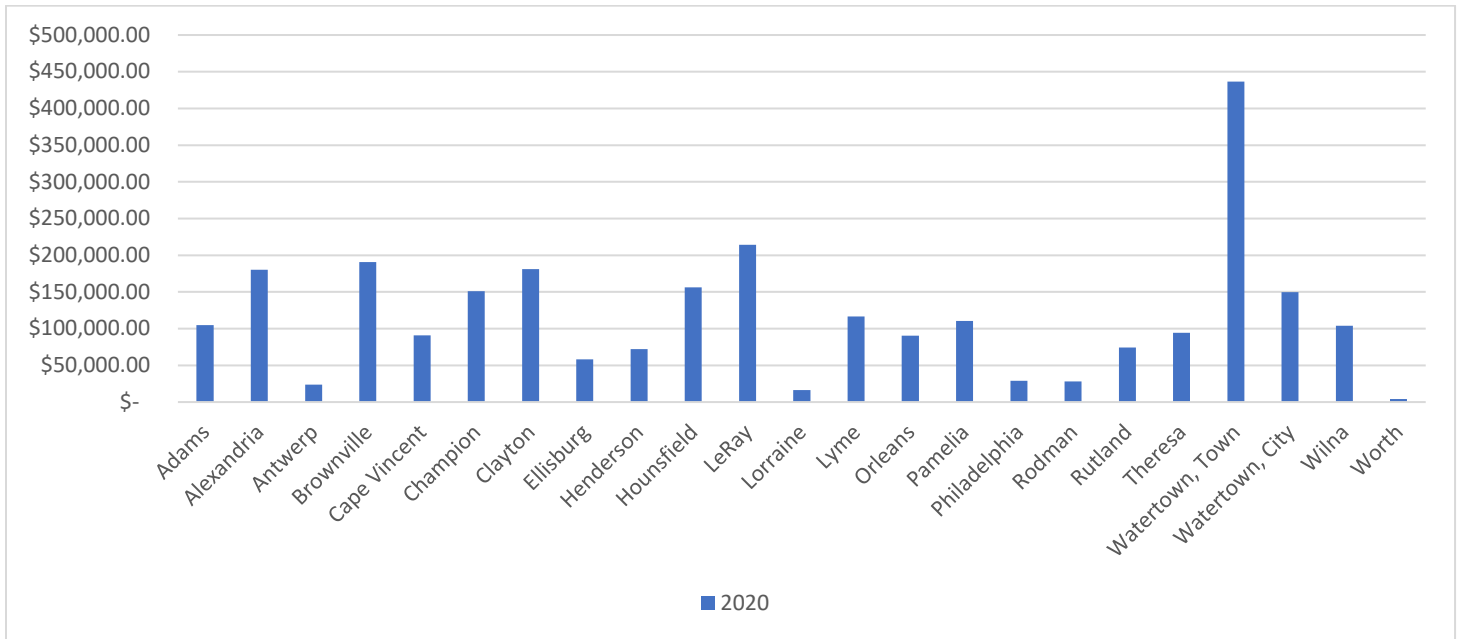


E-Recording is NOT required by the submitter.

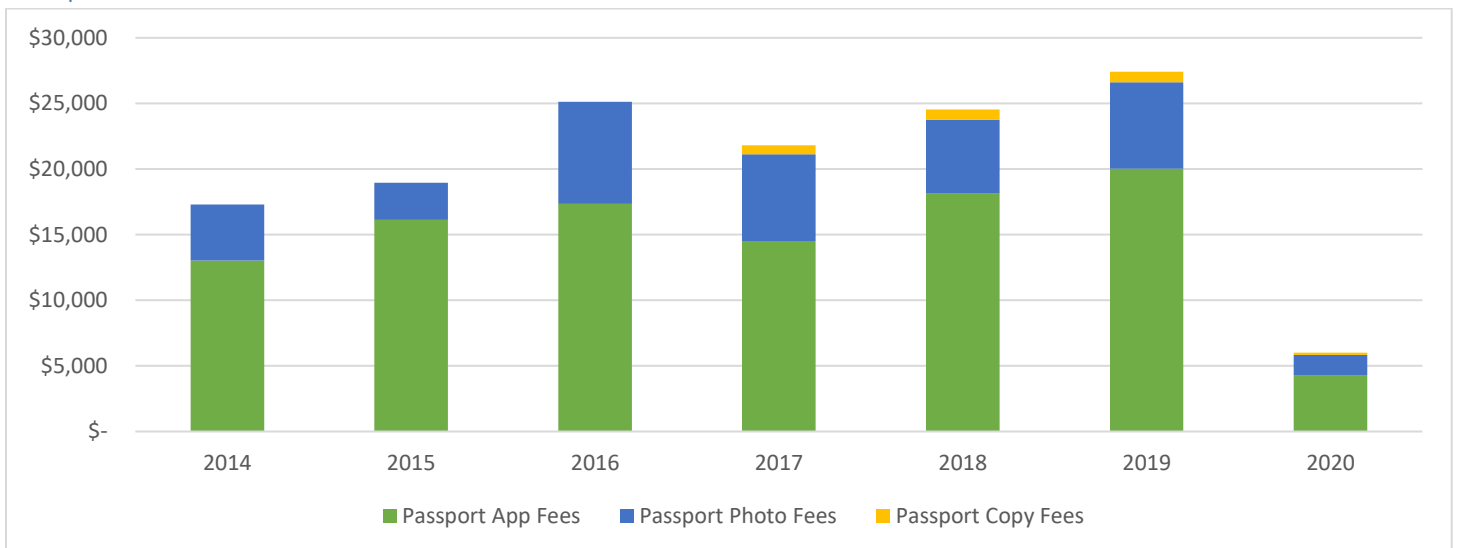


E-Filing is MANDATED for most case types.

Basic Mortgage Tax Collected for Each Town - 2020



Passport Revenue 2014-2020



Recording Department – 2020 Highlights

- Revenue is up 9.5% from the previous year.
- Revenue is 13.1% higher than original estimates.
- Total Mortgage Tax Collected increased 40.5% from the previous year.
- Revenue from this department covered all other expenses of the County Clerk budget, and resulted in the largest fund balance yet for the current County Clerk.
- The total number of documents recorded/filed decreased 16.8% from the previous year.
- Due to COVID, the U.S. Department of State has been significantly behind in processing passport applications. Therefore, the decision was made to temporarily suspend processing applications in our office. We resumed processing these applications in 2021.

Records Management

Totals by Department

Department	# of Boxes in Storage	# of Requests	# of Boxes Transferred	# of Boxes Destroyed
Administration	143	2	1	18
Board of Elections	175	0	0	26
Code Enforcement	1,697	28	0	0
Community Services	386	3	33	46
County Attorney	373	0	0	0
County Clerk	3,577	370	40	83
District Attorney	1,250	57	96	24
Dept. Social Services	60	0	0	12
Employment & Training	38	0	13	8
Highway	198	3	0	9
Human Resources	54	13	5	7
Insurance	95	30	0	7
Office For the Aging	14	0	0	0
Planning	2	0	0	0
Probation	240	42	0	5
Public Defender	374	43	51	1
Public Health/ME*	138	6	5	101
Purchasing	151	134	0	0
Real Property	83	0	0	0
Sheriff*	6	5	0	87
Treasurer	464	0	0	17
TOTALS:	9,200	736	244	451

**The majority of boxes destroyed for Public Health and Sheriff were stored, prepped and destroyed at their site.*

Records Management – General Information

- The County Clerk is the Records Management Officer for Jefferson County
- This Department is responsible for managing records for all County Departments
- Increased Digitization is resulting in fewer requests, fewer transfers, and more destruction across all departments.
 - Since 2014, the County Clerk’s Office has been able to destroy 859 boxes of records due to digitization, which frees up valuable space in our Inactive Records Center.
 - Starting in 2020, Records Management has scanned 20 boxes of pistol permit files for the Sheriff’s Department. These records are being stored in our document management system.

Potential Revenue Sources

Revenue Source	Potential Annual Revenue
*Imposition of Local Mortgage Tax	\$ 1,089,806.00
*Increase of Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$ 795,000.00
**Imposition of County Passenger Vehicle Use Tax	\$ 396,580.00

**Potential Revenue based on 2020 Actual Revenues*

***Potential Revenue based on Current Registration Information available at data.ny.gov*

Local Mortgage Tax

What Would Change: Currently $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1% is collected on the amount of mortgage. This would increase to 1%.

Who Does it Affect: New Mortgages. Affects taxpayers maybe 1-2 times in a lifetime. Most borrowers are not even aware of this fee as it is often included in closing costs.

How Many Other Counties Have It – 27 (Only 8 Counties are left at .75%)

Note: The allocation of this additional revenue is decided by the Board of Legislators.

Mortgage Amount	Current Tax	New Tax	Difference
\$100,000.00	\$750.00	\$1,000.00	\$250.00
\$250,000.00	\$1,875.00	\$2,500.00	\$625.00

Passenger Vehicle Use Tax

<https://dmv.ny.gov/registration/registration-fees-use-taxes-and-supplemental-fees-passenger-vehicles>

What Would Change:

Passenger Vehicle \leq 3500 = \$10.00 per two year registration

Passenger Vehicle $>$ 3500 = \$20.00 per two year registration

Who Does it Affect: All registrations of **passenger** vehicles with Jefferson County Address. (All other classes including Commercial are exempt from this additional fee.)

How Many Other Counties Have it – 39

Note: We get this \$\$ no matter where they register (Online or other DMV Office.)

Vehicle	Current 2yr Reg.	New 2yr Reg.	Difference
2020 Hyundai (3126 lbs)	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$10.00
2017 Chevy 1500 (5276 lbs)	\$79.00	\$99.00	\$20.00

Real Estate Transfer Tax

What Would Change: Currently \$4/\$1,000 on amount of sale price. This would increase to \$6.

Who Does it Affect: Purchaser(s) of New property. Affects taxpayers may 1-2 times in a lifetime. Most borrowers are not even aware of this fee as it is often included in closing fees.

How Many Other Counties Have it (Not all are the same rate) – (Columbia, Essex, Broome, Nassau, Tompkins)

Sale Price	Current Tax	New Tax	Difference
\$100,000.00	\$400.00	\$600.00	\$200.00
\$250,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$500.00