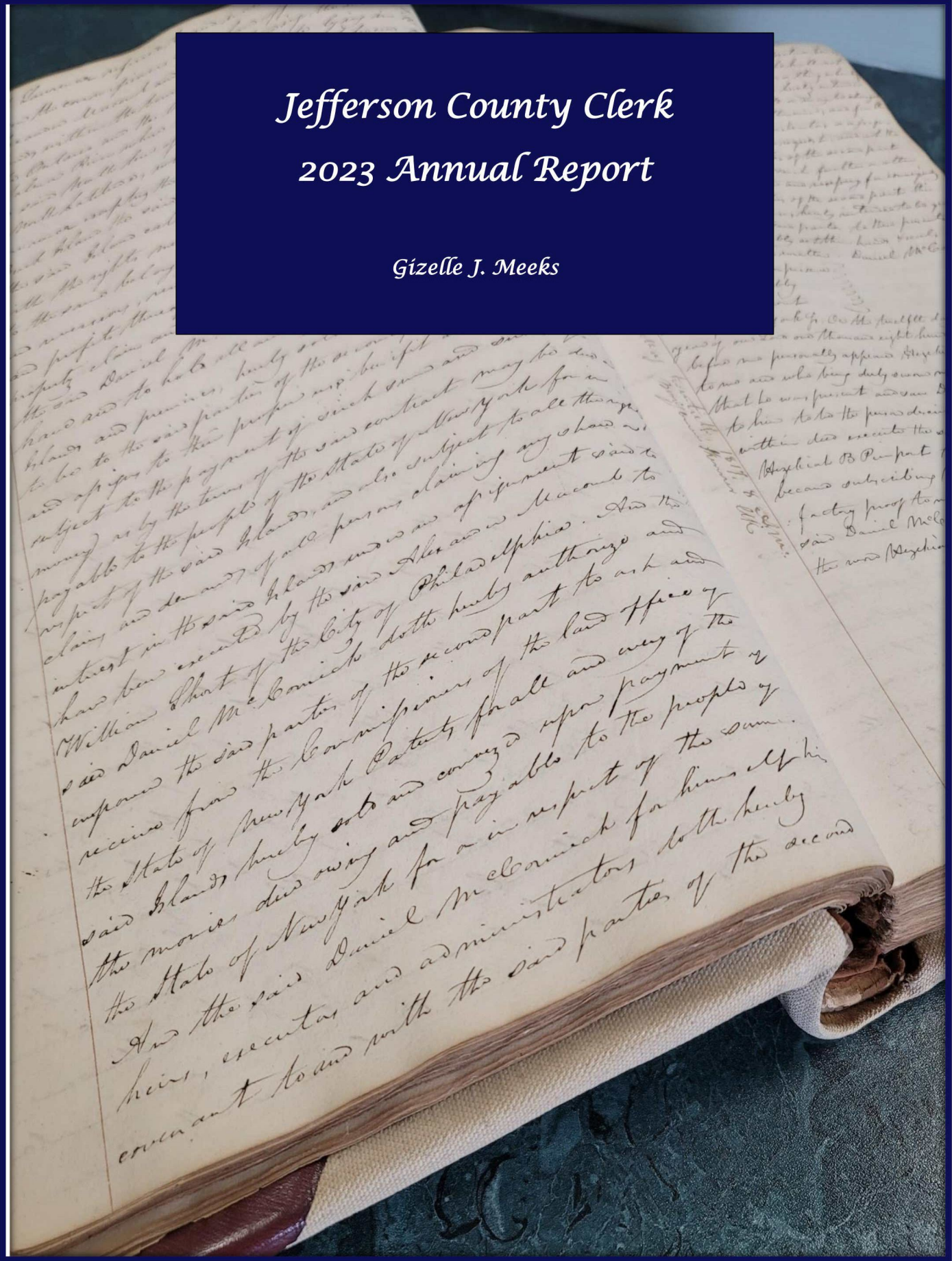


Jefferson County Clerk

2023 Annual Report

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 2023 Annual Report of the Jefferson County Clerk. The duties of the County Clerk are mandated by the New York State Constitution and federal, state, and local law. The dedicated staff works laboriously to carry out these duties and serve the public.

The County Clerk's Office is a state constitutional office that is the primary depositor for records created within the County. The County Clerk serves as the Clerk of the Corporation of Jefferson County and a registrar of mortgages, deeds, and all real property records within Jefferson County. The County Clerk also serves as Clerk of the Supreme and County Courts and is commissioned to collect all fees of the courts and protect, produce upon request, and preserve court records. Under Vehicle and Traffic Law, the County Clerk acts as an agent for the Commissioner of the New York State Motor Vehicles Department. In addition, the County Clerk serves as the Jefferson County Record Management Officer (RMO) and serves as an agent to the U.S. Dept of State Passport Agency.

The Jefferson County Clerk's Office collects and distributes monies for various state agencies. The County's share of these collections is submitted monthly to the County Treasurer 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 paid to the County Treasurer and disbursed to different agencies throughout the state.

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As always, I aspire to continue providing outstanding services while always striving to do better than before. We will continue to work hard to serve the constituents of Jefferson County and hope to contribute even more to the overall fund balance for the County in 2024.

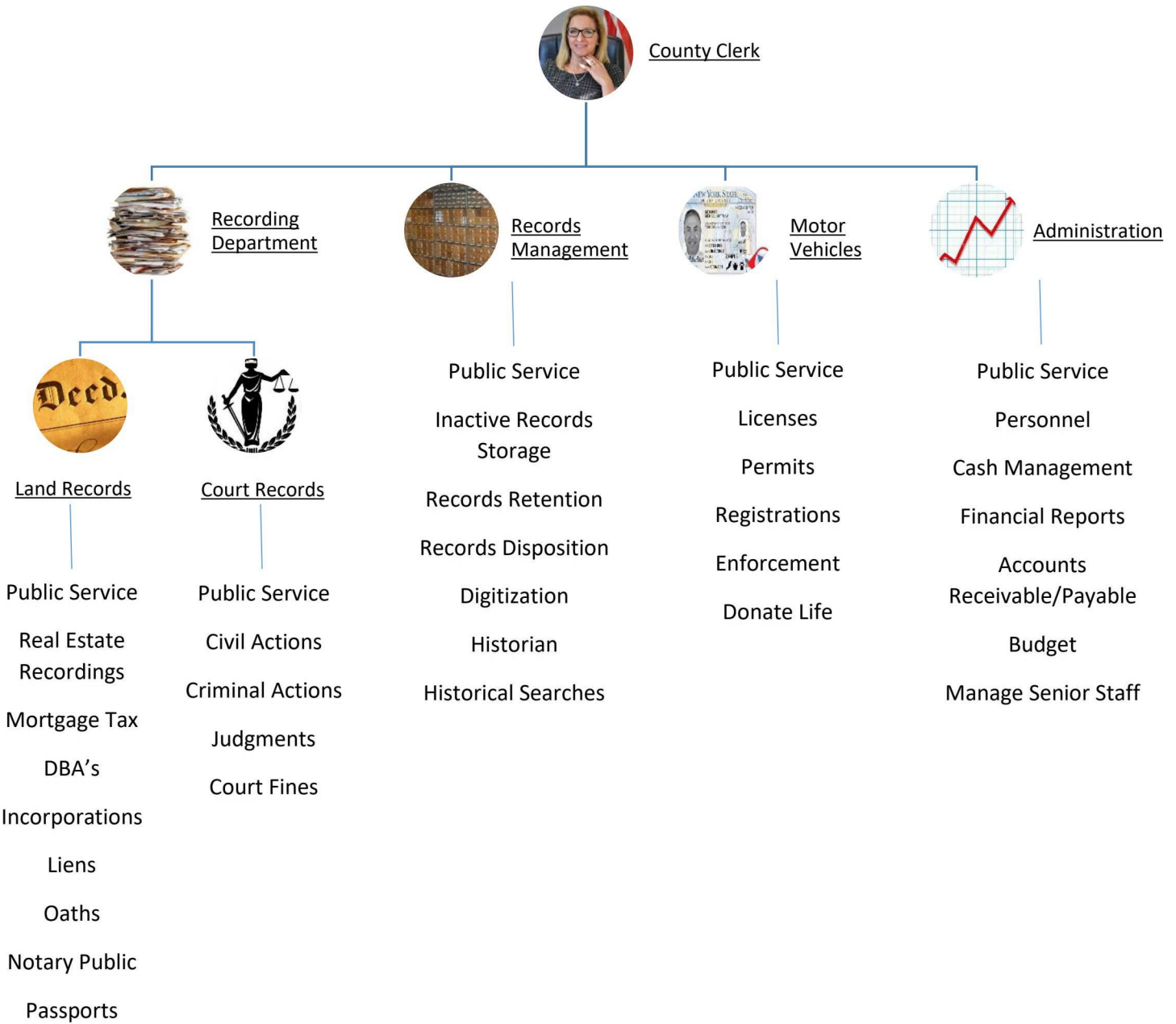
As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.
Respectfully Submitted,

Hon. Gizelle J. Meeks
Jefferson County Clerk

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Jefferson County Clerk Organizational Chart



Statement of All Funds Collected and Disbursed

	Jefferson County	Towns	NYS	Total Rec'd
Mortgage Tax	\$ 349,016.60	\$ 1,938,978.14	\$ 802,832.64	\$ 3,090,827.38
Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$ 4,348.00	\$ -	\$ 2,163,007.09	\$ 2,167,355.09
NYS ORPS	\$ 32,544.00	\$ -	\$ 518,581.00	\$ 551,125.00
Court Fees	\$ 112,405.50	\$ -	\$ 1,193,455.43	\$ 1,305,860.93
DWI Fines (Probation)	\$ 17,989.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,989.00
Cultural Education Fees	\$ 11,109.00	\$ -	\$ 218,116.87	\$ 229,225.87
Records Management Fees	\$ 4,173.00	\$ -	\$ 72,615.82	\$ 76,788.82
Notary	\$ 4,920.00	\$ -	\$ 6,400.00	\$ 11,320.00
County Clerk Fees	\$ 870,640.98	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 870,640.98
Department of Motor Vehicles	\$ 653,255.73	\$ -	\$ 2,752,936.29	\$ 3,406,192.02
Totals:	\$ 2,060,401.81	\$ 1,938,978.14	\$ 7,727,945.14	\$ 11,727,325.09

County Clerk Fees Breakdown

Copy Fees	\$ 45,566.12
E-Commerce Subscriptions	\$ 71,652.00
Cover Page Fees	\$ 55,545.00
Filing Fees	\$ 40,262.00
Recording Fees	\$ 608,465.70
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,466.00
Overages	\$ 3,766.81
Passport Fees	\$ 16,905.00
Photo Fee	\$ 5,470.00
UCCs	\$ 19,160.00
Bank Account Interest	\$ 382.35
Total:	\$ 870,640.98

**There are still Notary and Incorporation revenue Receipts pending from NYS in the amount of \$550.00*

Expenses by Sub-Department

1410 - County Clerk Expenses

Personal Services	\$	385,847.32
Office Expenses *	\$	127,365.55
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	237,709.94
Subtotal	\$	750,922.81

1415 - DMV Expenses

Personal Services	\$	496,471.07
Office Expenses *	\$	5,189.56
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	341,988.22
Subtotal	\$	843,648.85

1460 - Records Management Expenses

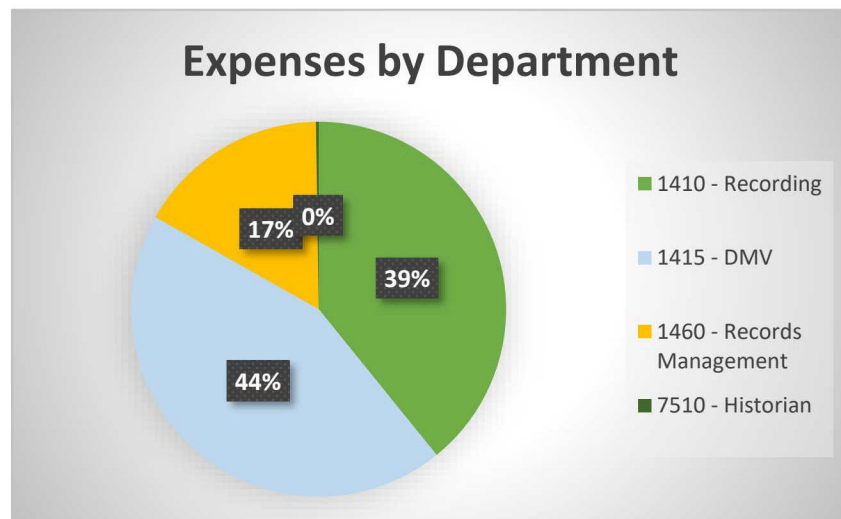
Personal Services	\$	194,105.58
Office Expenses *	\$	5,770.07
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	118,033.71
Subtotal	\$	317,909.36

7510 - Historian Expenses

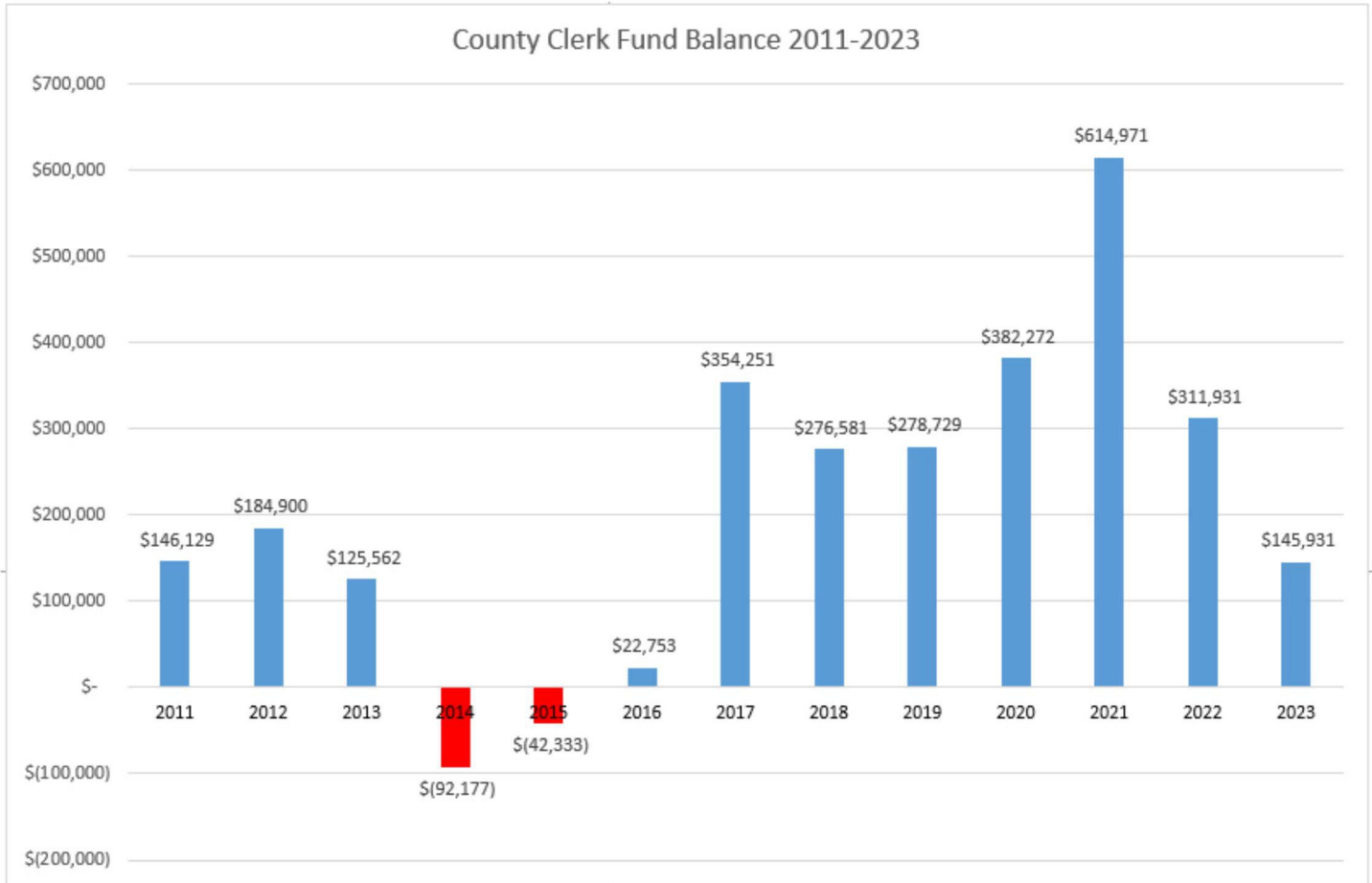
Personal Services	\$	2,828.03
Office Expenses *	\$	-
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	1,668.28
Subtotal	\$	4,496.31

Total County Clerk Expenses 2023:	\$	1,916,977.33
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*Office Expense increase due to contract change from Staples to WB Mason



End of Year Fund Balance 2001-2023



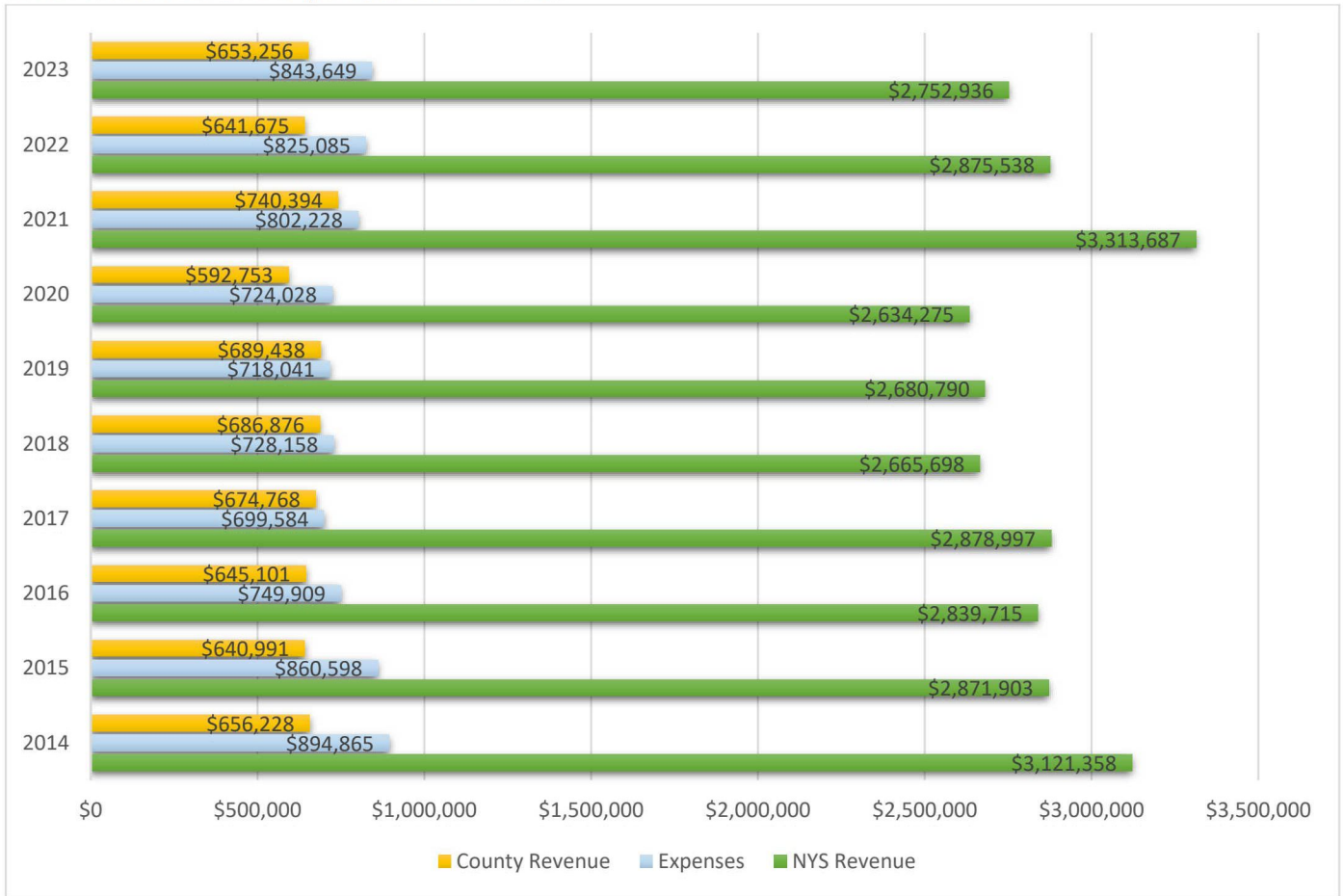
Fund Balance – General Information

In the executive summary of my 2024 budget, I predicted that the overall fund balance would decrease due to the state of the economy. Despite these challenges, the graph above shows that the Jefferson County Clerk's Office contributed \$145,931.00 to the fund balance for the year 2023. Inflation and high-interest rates negatively impacted real property and motor vehicle sales. In addition, the increase in personal services and office expenses stems from contractual changes. The Jefferson County Clerk's Office operated without any cost to taxpayers.

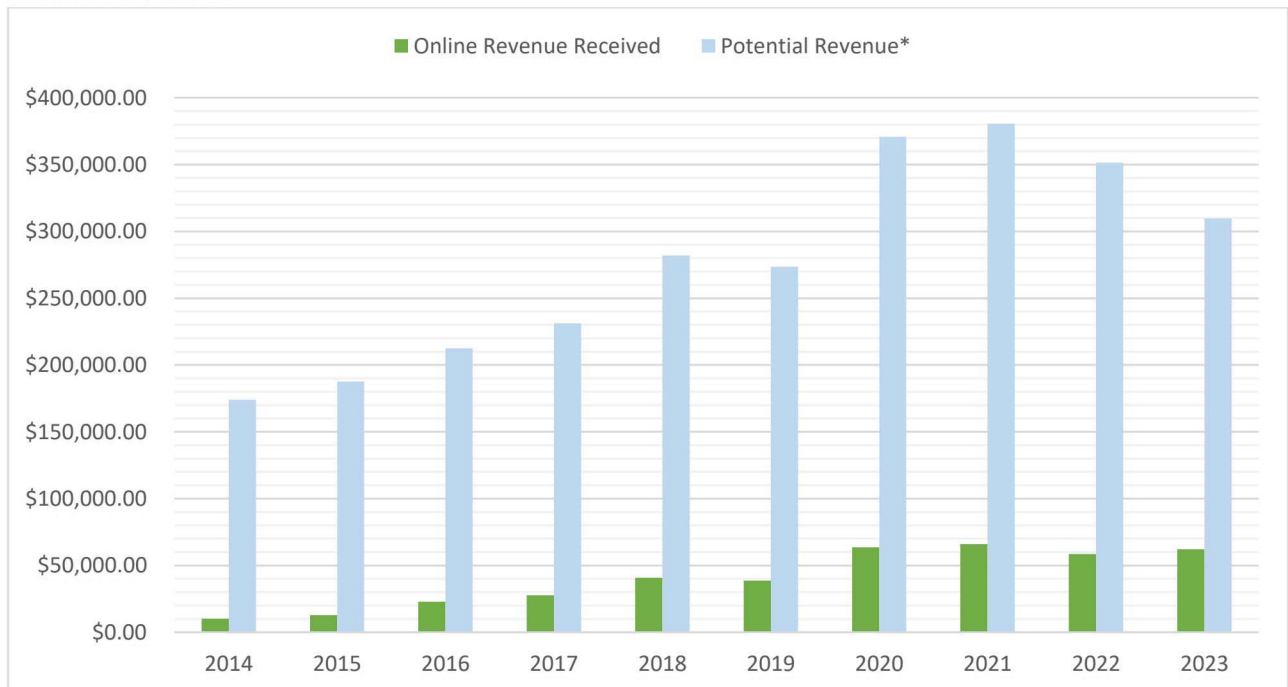
Department of Motor Vehicles

You will notice from the charts below that the 2023 DMV revenue increased slightly, partly due to my office diligently supporting the New York State DMV in processing downstate transactions and the increase in online revenue.

Overall Revenues and Expenses 2014-2023:

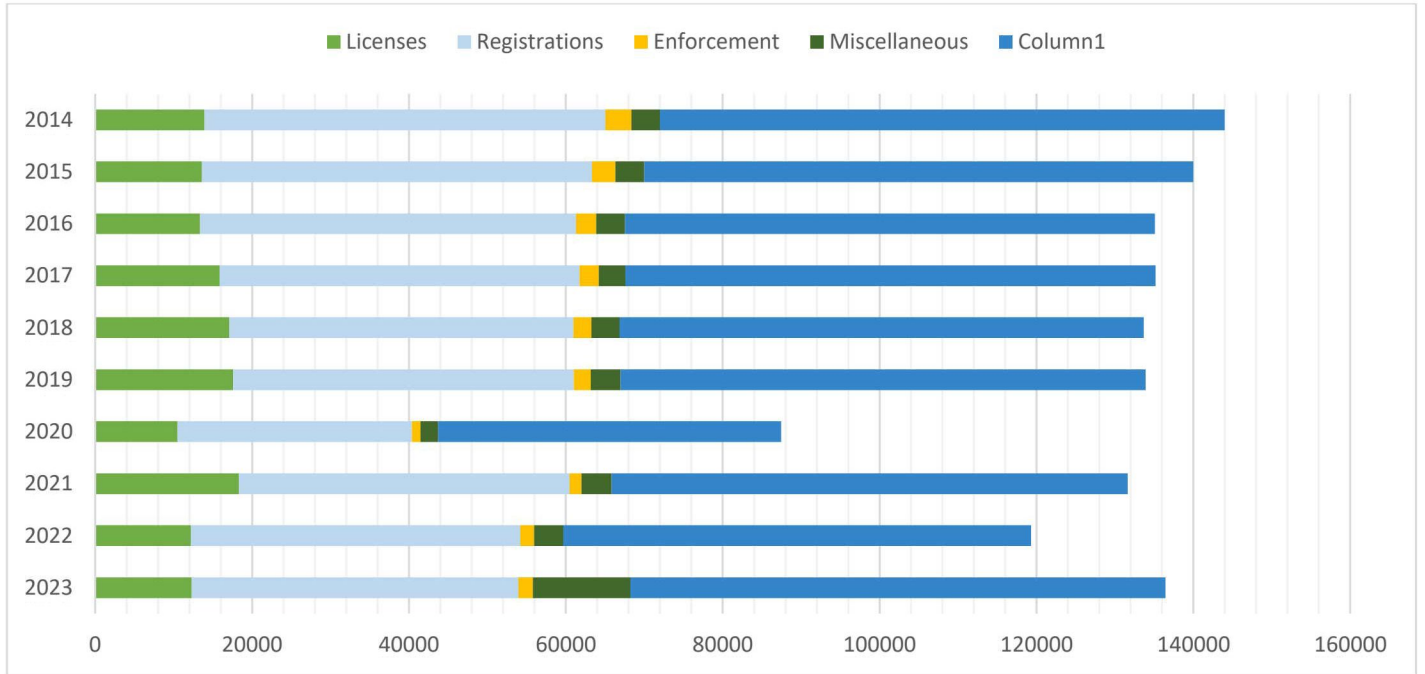


DMV Online Revenue:



*Potential Revenue totals are what Jefferson County would have received if all the online transactions were processed within the office at a retention rate of 12.7%. Looking forward, 2024 should show a significant increase in DMV retention due to the increase.

Total Number of DMV Transactions 2014-2023



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 – 2023 Highlights

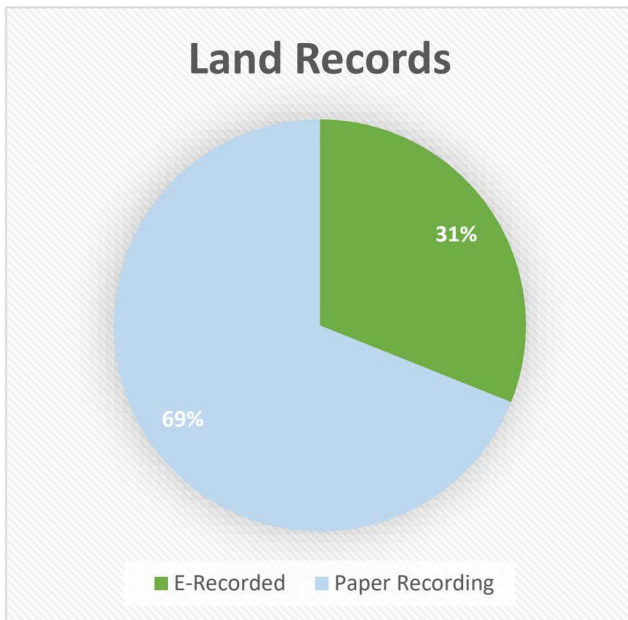
- Revenue is up by 1.79% over FY 2022.
- Revenue is 22.62 % higher than original estimates.
- Revenue from online transactions increased by \$3,682.42 from last year – an increase of 6.29%.
- The total number of transactions processed increased by 8561 from last year – an increase of 14.35%.
- DMV cost taxpayers just over \$190,000 in 2023.
- DMV will continue to operate on an appointment-only basis; however, in 2023, we accommodated, on average, 380 walk-ins each month.

Recording Department

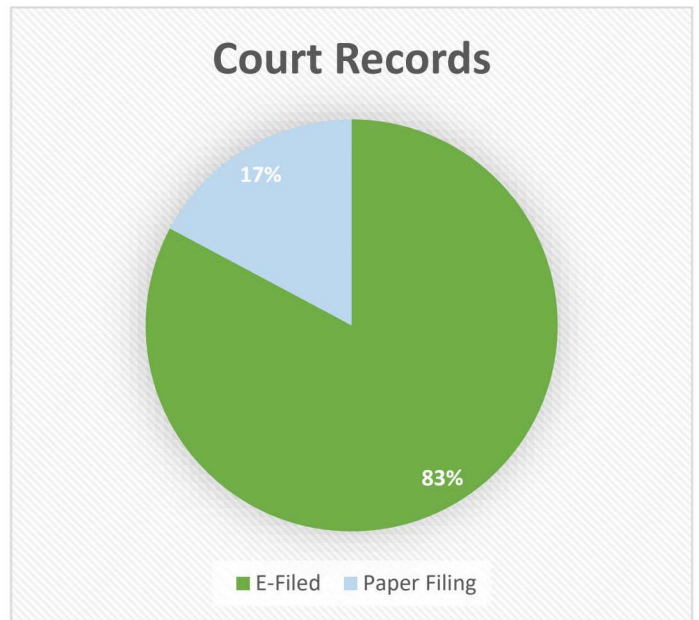
Overall Revenues and Expenses 2014-2023



Percentage of Total Documents Recorded or Filed Electronically

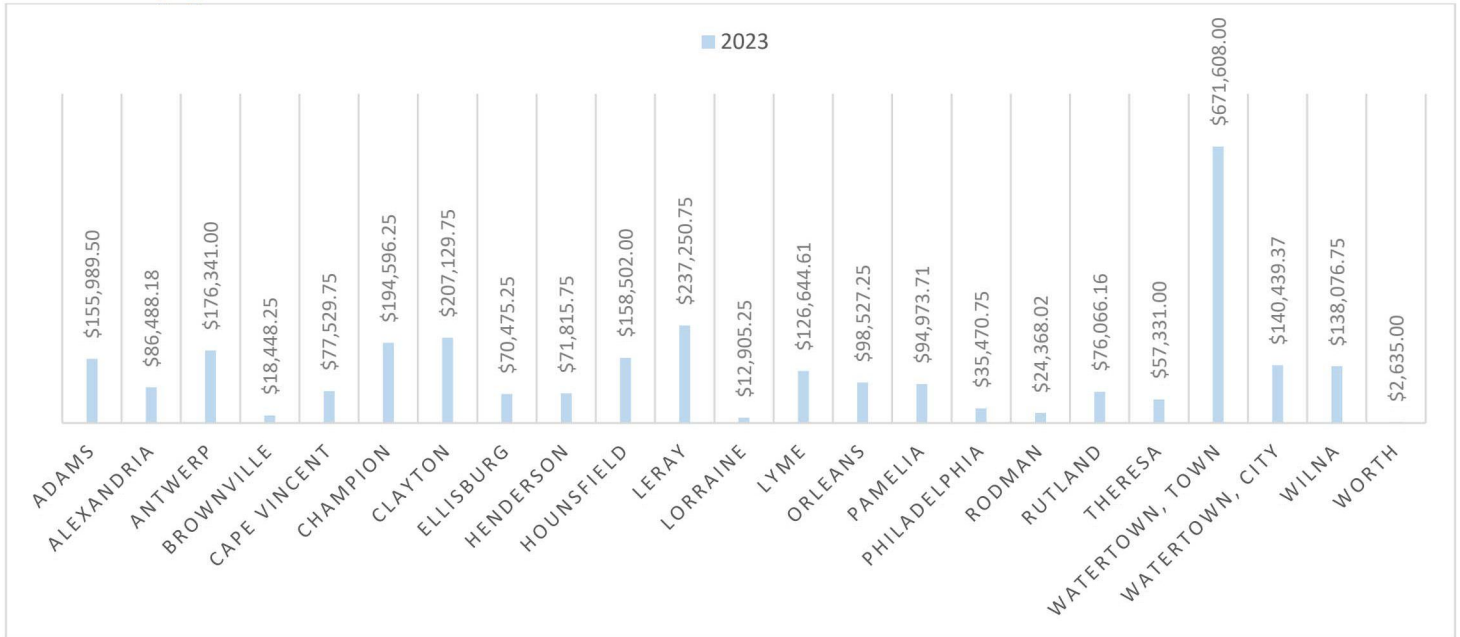


E-Recording is NOT required by the submitter.

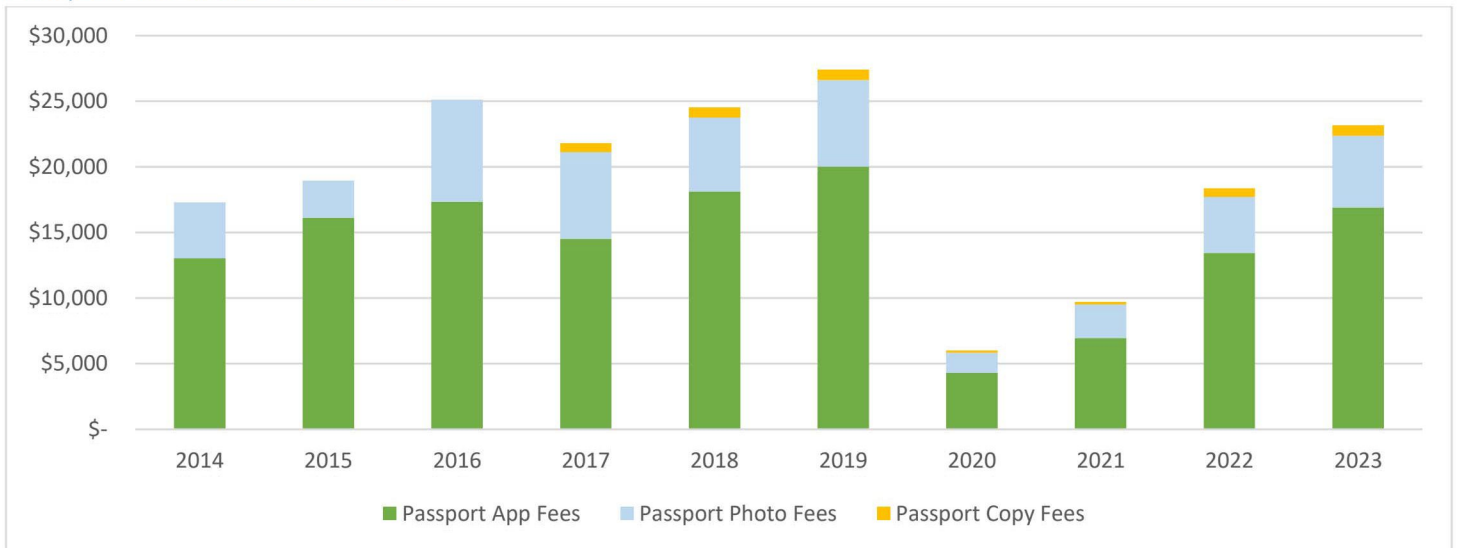


E-Filing is MANDATED for most case types.

Basic Mortgage Tax Collected for Each Town - 2023



Passport Revenue 2014-2023



Recording Department – 2023 Highlights

- Revenue is down \$124,060.00 from last year – a decrease of 8.93%.
 - Due to the state of the economy, there was a significant decrease in property sales, which contributed to the reduction of mortgage and transfer taxes collected.
- Revenue is 5.71% higher than original estimates.
- Total Mortgage Tax Collected is down \$1,080,999.67 from last year – a decrease of 25.91%.

Records Management

Totals by Department

Records Management Annual Report - 2023

Requests		Transfers		Destruction	
Administration	0.00	Administration	0.00	Administration	13.00
Board of Elections	0.00	Board of Elections	0.00	Board of Elections	73.00
Buildings & Grounds	0.00	Buildings & Grounds	0.00	Buildings & Grounds	0.00
Code Enforcement	33.00	Code Enforcement	0.00	Code Enforcement	0.00
Community Services	2.00	Community Services	3.25	Community Services	49.00
County Attorney	0.00	County Attorney	0.00	County Attorney	3.00
County Clerk	123.00	County Clerk	15.00	County Clerk	144.00
District Attorney	17.00	District Attorney	0.00	District Attorney	0.00
DSS/County Home	0.00	DSS/County Home	0.00	DSS/County Home	0.00
Dog Control	0.00	Dog Control	0.00	Dog Control	0.00
Employment & Training	1.00	Employment & Training	0.00	Employment & Training	8.00
General Public	299.00	General Public	0.00	General Public	0.00
Highway	0.00	Highway	11.00	Highway	9.00
Human Resources	0.00	Human Resources	0.00	Human Resources	0.00
Information Services	0.00	Information Services	0.00	Information Services	0.00
Insurance	5.00	Insurance	38.00	Insurance	0.00
Medical Examiner	12.00	Medical Examiner	0.00	Medical Examiner	0.00
Office for the Aging	0.00	Office for the Aging	0.00	Office for the Aging	22.00
Planning	0.00	Planning	0.00	Planning	0.00
Probation	73.00	Probation	0.00	Probation	3.00
Public Defender	32.00	Public Defender	58.00	Public Defender	0.00
Public Health	0.00	Public Health	0.00	Public Health	69.00
Purchasing	4.00	Purchasing	20.00	Purchasing	12.00
Real Property	0.00	Real Property	0.00	Real Property	0.00
Sheriff	16.00	Sheriff	0.00	Sheriff	106.75
Treasurer	0.00	Treasurer	2.00	Treasurer	11.25
Veterans Services	0.00	Veterans Services	0.00	Veterans Services	0.00
Total:	617.00	Total:	147.25	Total:	523.00

**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 in accordance to the New York State Department of Archives retention schedule.
- 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 1492 boxes of records due to digitization, which frees up valuable space in our Inactive Records Center.

Potential Revenue Sources

Revenue Source	Potential Annual Revenue
*Imposition of Local Mortgage Tax	\$772,706.85
*Increase of Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$1,083,677.50
**Imposition of County Passenger Vehicle Use Tax	\$610,830.00

*Potential Revenue based on 2023 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

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 maybe 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

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