

Ulster County Executive race: Ryan vs. Hayes, the sequel

by [Jesse J. Smith/November 1, 2019/0 comments](#)



Jack Hayes and Pat Ryan.

Six months after coasting to victory by a three-to-one margin, County Executive Pat Ryan, a Democrat, faces an electoral rematch with Ulster County Conservative Party Chairman John J. "Jack" Hayes.

In addition to his own party line, Ryan, a Gardiner resident, holds the Working Families and Independence party lines. Hayes is running on the Conservative and Republican party lines. The April 30 special election was held to fill out the remainder of former county executive Mike Hein's term after Hein resigned to take a post in the administration of Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The winner of the Nov. 5 general election will take a full four-year

term as county executive.

Ryan, 37, is a Kingston native and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He served two tours in Iraq as a battalion intelligence officer before leaving the Army and obtaining a master's in security studies from Georgetown. Ryan worked in the security technology sector developing intelligence software for military and law enforcement purposes before returning to Ulster County and settling in Gardiner in 2016. Last year, he finished second in a seven-way Democratic primary for the party's nod in the 19th Congressional District race.

Ryan ran a platform that included a local version of the "Green New Deal," providing additional resources to combat the opioid epidemic, diversifying the county's economy and addressing income inequality. Ryan's first county budget, presented earlier this month, included items in line with those priorities, including a new "Green Careers Academy" to train workers for jobs in the renewable energy sector, as well as additional funding for drug treatment and prevention programs run by the Ulster County Sheriff's Office. Ryan's budget also included a 0.25 percent decrease in the tax levy.

Hayes, 76 is a retired state trooper and former master sergeant in the New York Air National Guard. Hayes holds a master's in public administration from Marist College and previously served as Gardiner town supervisor and in the county legislature. Since losing to Ryan by wide margin in April, he has run a low-key campaign. Hayes stepped into the race in March after Republicans failed to field a candidate for the special election in the February convention. In a debate livestreamed by the *Daily Freeman*, Hayes acknowledged that his candidacy was a long shot, but emphasized his desire to give Ulster County voters a choice. Hayes said he favors increased economic development efforts by county government, and wants to improve county-based mental health services to deal with the opioid epidemic.

During the debate, Hayes said he would rescind an executive order issued

by Ryan forbidding county workers from cooperating with federal immigration authorities.