

referendum; it also requires a plan of action. She and Supervisor Same want to be sure that everyone is aware that the consolidation feasibility study has begun. They also want to be sure that everyone is informed of the process that will take place over the next nine months or so as the study progresses.

Mayor Smith stated while this feasibility study has just begun, the Town and Village have been working together for four years to share services and costs. They have been holding joint meetings, created a website (SenecaFalls.com), applied for grants and secured shared services funding which paid for the Community's Comprehensive Plan. They jointly prepared the economic development strategy with more Community input and jointly initiated the Local Development Corporation, hiring a full time Economic Developer to work on creating jobs and focusing on business retention and expansion. They created an Intermunicipal Agreement in 2005 to share space together and reduce costs. Presently, they are working on a plan for the \$1.06 million DOT Trail Enhancement Project Grant for downtown.

Mayor Smith stated the Center for Governmental Research will be doing the feasibility study. Charles Zettek and his Team have just started to conduct interviews and gather information about the Community. She and Supervisor Same thought it would be a good idea if residents had a chance to verbalize or put in writing some of their thoughts and concerns as the study begins.

Supervisor Same stated three years ago, the Town had a fire in their building which, at that point, created a unique opportunity to work with the Village to see if there was some opportunity to join together in a shared facility. He said out of that came a whole lot of things; there is an Intermunicipal Agreement and there are a lot of things the Town and Village have in common that they share. The issue the Town is faced with now is a much more taxing issue because of its current location. The Boards have looked at opportunities, and have not been able to reach a consensus amongst the two Boards as to a location. Mr. Same stated the Town Board is in a position where it has to move quickly because of some issues it faces with the current location. He said the Boards want to look at all opportunities to help the taxpayers and provide services to the taxpayers of Seneca Falls – both Town and Village. Hopefully, the study that is being done will show the Boards the way they can do that. Mr. Same stated in the meantime, the Boards will continue to work together to try and resolve some of the more pressing issues.

Jean O'Connell introduced Charles Zettek and Scott Sittig from the Center for Governmental Research who will be doing the Study. Charles Zettek stated the Center for Governmental Research has done a large number of shared services/consolidation studies across the State for towns and villages, so they have a lot of experience knowing how to look at the financial data that is available. He said it is very important for them to talk to department heads, elected officials and others, and walk around the Community and look at the Community facilities so they have a good understanding about what makes up the Community and the types of decisions and interests the folks are curious about in terms of thinking about your future going forward. Mr. Zettek stated they will not be able to answer any questions because they just started to collect the information. He added it's important for the citizens to have the opportunity to let him know what their concerns are. He noted they have created a questionnaire sheet which is available for the residents to complete. What they are trying to do is to understand what concerns you have, what you would like them to look at in the study, and any recommendations or suggestions as to how you think things can be improved in the areas provided by local governments. Mr. Zettek noted the value of having them as consultants collect the information is that these questionnaires are totally confidential. The benefit is you have a neutral third party who has seen these comments and who can go out and ask questions and try to find out what the answers are.

Mr. Zettek went on to explain the process of the study which will take approximately ten months. After the information has been collected, they will come up with a list of options. Those options will be presented to a study committee, and the study committee will decide which options make sense, and they will summarize all those options in a final report. In addition to coming up with the options, they will identify what the cost and tax implications are of the different options. That final report will be the public document that the public will have going forward, and hopefully, it will be a manual like a comprehensive plan that the Community can use in terms of how you want to design government services going into the future.

Mr. Same stated at the end of the Meeting, the Boards are looking for three residents to participate on this Committee that was mentioned. Anyone interested should contact either Town Hall or Village Hall. Dan Babbitt asked what kind of resources is expected of the volunteers to bring to the Committee; Mr. Same replied a commitment to meet with the two people from each of the Boards and analyze the results and bring it back to the Community. Mr. Zettek added it probably involves four to six meetings over the time period, and they could be about 2-3 hours long.

Al Corrado mentioned the talk about consolidation, and asked if the Town people will have the same services as the Village people, such as sewer and garbage disposal, and if the services are extended to the Town, will the Town people be liable for Village taxes. Mr. Same stated the Town has an agreement with Appleton for refuse removal; that agreement is up for negotiations this year, and will be going out for bids to see what comes in in

terms of the cost. In the Village, the cost went up substantially to the point that they could justify doing it in-house. If the opportunity does arrive, it might be more feasible for the Village to pick up for the Town. Mr. Corrado asked about sewage; Mr. Zettek replied when Village services are extended out to the Town, typically you would have a service district and you would be paying a user fee just as Village residents would pay if they have a sewer. Mrs. O'Connell suggested that Mr. Corrado put that on a questionnaire.

Jim Bero questioned why there is a Village and a Town – do we know the answers as to why that transpired. Mr. Zettek replied the State Constitution requires only that two entities exist – towns and counties. The Town of Seneca Falls had to exist before the Village of Seneca Falls. He said usually the way villages come about is they are the intersection of two roads, or something back 150 years ago where you started to have a population cluster, and that population cluster decided that they wanted to have services and it made sense to incorporate to get those services.

Martha Dygert asked if it would require annexation to extend the services of the Village beyond its boundaries. Mr. Zettek replied yes – once the Village boundaries were initially set, then any extension would require annexation. He added districts are extensions of Village services (such as water and sewer districts) past the Village boundary into towns, and people in the districts pay those costs in the same way as Village residents. There is a logical way to extend Village services at least for utilities out in the Town areas without changing the boundaries. Brief discussion followed.

August Sinicropi asked where we are in relation to other communities that CGR has worked with throughout the State in this process; Mr. Zettek replied you are ahead of the curve – you are in the top 5% across the State because you applied in the first round of grant funding. He added you are definitely farther ahead than most communities across the State.

Paul Wenderlich mentioned police services – the Village has them and the Town doesn't share them; will those services be extended and will they be kept or dissolved. Mr. Zettek replied he didn't know the answer, but there are several different model potentials.

Thomas David asked how many municipalities has CGR worked with currently, and of those, how many have they found beneficial to do consolidation of services or to consolidate Village and Town. Mr. Zettek replied as to actual projects, they probably have six or seven right now. He added as far as shared services, in every single one that they have done a project for, there are opportunities for shared services; in some cases, they have done them and in other cases they have tabled them and said they want to wait. He said not very many go through the dissolution process and that's because dissolution is for a village entity that exists within a town. Sporadically, there are dissolution votes that come up; voters have to vote to dissolve villages. Mr. Zettek mentioned that there a couple coming up this March – Village of Macedon and Village of Speculator – every year, there are two or three sprinkled across the State. He thinks there has been one village dissolution since 1995; actual dissolutions of villages are very infrequent.

Mr. Zettek explained there are two ways of starting a formal dissolution process – one is by having at least 30% of the taxpayers sign a petition and present it to a village board, and the village board has to start the dissolution process. The other way is for a village board itself to start the dissolution process. The dissolution process is defined by State Law as to what must be done, Public Hearings, time frame, etc. In a dissolution process, you must create a dissolution committee made up of village members and town members. The dissolution committee prepares a report, and part of that report is a plan that would determine how the town would take over services and the cost to taxpayers. Discussion followed.

James Bero asked the time frame if there was a decision to go ahead with the dissolution of the Village. Mr. Zettek replied the time frame is set out in State Law; December 31st of the year following the election where the voters say they want to dissolve the Village, the Village dissolves. He added the only people that vote in a village dissolution are valid electors in the Village.

Leslie Noble questioned the timing of the study – Supervisor Same indicated there is some urgency for the Town Board, and Mr. Zettek said at the beginning of his speech it would take ten months, and at the end of his speech he said the end of the summer for a plan. Mr. Zettek stated there is a disconnect – it has to be resolved between CGR and the Committee. He added their proposal said it would be a 6 to 10 month project. They will try to do the best they can to meet the needs of the Community. Mrs. O'Connell noted planning processes takes time; you can want things fast, but she thinks you want the right answers. Mr. Same stated he hopes that anything that is done will be in unison with the Village, and will be a benefit to the Community and will fall in with some of the outcomes that will come from the study. Dan Babbitt stated you don't need to wait 6 to 10 months to do some of these things, such as build a building. Discussion followed relative to the process of the study.

Gretchen Micio asked if there will be a vote of some sort at the end of this study. Mr. Zettek replied no – at the

end of this study, there will be a report to the Community by the study committee.

Robert Buccieri, Director of the LDC, stated coming up with their recommendation to the Committee, do they also assess resources outside the Town and Village, perhaps the County and State, for services provided by those entities. Mr. Zettek replied they would not look at services that are provided solely by the County, for example, Human Services, etc. They will look at delivery of services that are currently being provided by either the Town or the Village and the entire range of those services. He added if it makes sense to have some sort of other shared arrangement with another municipality or higher level of entity that's intersecting those range of services, they take that into account.

Mary Kelly Black said she is concerned about the Town building perhaps a shared building when we don't know what the outcome is in terms of how many people would be used, what the services might be, etc. and being not aware of what the pressure is.

August Sinicropi thanked the elected Officials for the work that they have done towards researching the shared services, and also putting the Town and Village out ahead of other communities in the State in this next step – it's a very positive thing.

Sylvester Campese stated there is no guarantee that dissolution would save money. Mr. Zettek replied that's right, but usually dissolution requires a whole lot of other things happening, and that's where the money comes up. Mr. Campese said there also could be a cut in services – there is no guarantee the same services would be provided. Mr. Zettek stated technically, that's correct; the dissolution plan is what the residents vote on which will tell what is going to happen.

Menzo Case stated if there is an agreement for shared services so the Town takes over services, is that agreement permanent or can a future Village Board (assuming there is no dissolution) dissolve that agreement and say they want to take that back. Mr. Zettek replied those agreements can be set up in place initially for a maximum of five years, and then they are rolled over from that. He added those agreements are documents that can be modified by Boards at any point in time. Discussion followed relative to the dissolution process and the dissolution plan committee.

Emil Bove stated some of the examples used suggesting that the Police Department or Fire Department be eliminated, he would hope they would check out the procedures on those things before you talk about them and repeatedly talk about them. He said if you repeatedly say that, all you are doing is explaining some of the people's worst fears of the dissolution process. He thinks we should be more careful about what is said and examples given.

Fran Wenderlich stated this is a New York State initiative; what is the advantage to New York State to have communities go into shared services. Mrs. Cook said one of the answers might be that taxes in New York State are so high that the State is trying to look for remedies, and maybe some shared services will lower the taxes. Brief discussion followed.

Connie Sowards, Village Administrator, stated she wanted to make sure everyone understands that the Shared Services Committee that the Town and Village have created to get recommendations from the Consultants is not a dissolution committee. Martha Dygert asked for clarification – what the Consultants will be submitting is a compilation of facts; it's not a recommendation – is that correct. Mr. Zettek replied yes.

Mary Kelly Black said if a decision is made to dissolve or to combine entities, what kind of assurance does someone in the Fire Department or Police Department have that voted for dissolution, that they will still have a job. Mr. Zettek replied it will be part of the plan.

Rebecca Holden said Mr. Zettek mentioned that there was one community that did dissolve in 1995; how is that working out. Mr. Zettek replied it was the Village and Town of Ticonderoga, and they are happy of having done that – they saved money, but the question of a lot is a value judgment.

Mrs. O'Connell stated this is just the beginning; they have not come to any conclusions about dissolving anything. She added CGR was hired to examine the Village and the Town and come up with some recommendations, and hopefully, can give a good plan.

Jeff Hartwell stated it was mentioned earlier that there is an urgency to get it done right away – what was the urgency. Mr. Same replied the Town Offices and Court are in very confined quarters; the Court situation is much more of an urgent situation. He added the Court has very limited space, and short of exposing ourselves, the Town needs to do something very soon in terms of a permanent location – we have been in rented space for three years – we can't wait ten months. Brief discussion followed.

Fran Wenderlich stated the Community does not have to wait for this intervention to make a decision about a shared facility for the Town and Village; that is something that can be done now. Mr. Same said he is hoping this can be done now or very soon; if this is done, he thinks this will fall right in place with what this study will produce. Mrs. Wenderlich asked what does the Community need to do to move this along – she doesn't want to see this opportunity go. Mr. Same said this is the main reason why the Town hasn't done anything because it sees this as an opportunity for the Community. He added the Town and Village have been working together – we have looked at sites.

Emil Bove commented you have a very small Community and two Boards; to get something done should have been simple. The Town Board had a great idea to build a new building and all the services could have been there, but for some reason, that hasn't happened. He said for him, there is a problem that for the Town to do something, the Village has to agree; we need to move forward. Mr. Bove said this is one of the main reasons why he has many concerns about these two levels of government that can't seem to get together on something like this. Discussion followed relative to locations for a shared facility.

Mrs. O'Connell thanked everyone for coming, and said this is just the beginning.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

NICALETTA J. GREER
Town Clerk

SENECA FALLS TOWN BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

MARCH 4, 2008

The Seneca Falls Town Board held a regular monthly Meeting on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at the Seneca Falls Community Center, 35 Water Street.

Present were Supervisor Peter Same; Councilpersons Duane Moore, Lucille Cook, Stephen Dougherty and Timothy Snyder. Also present were Patrick Morrell, Attorney for the Town; Donald Wood, Highway Superintendent; Steven Turkett, Zoning Officer; Cynthia Loncosky, Assessor and Joyce Mahoney, Town Justice.

Supervisor Same called the Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. A roll call was taken of the Board Members and all were present; the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Open Bids – Recreation Truck: Mr. Same noted there is one bid for the 1996 Dodge Ram 2500 Recreation pickup truck, which is as follows:

David Clark, 16 Carol Avenue, Seneca Falls - \$503.00.

Mr. Same stated the bid will be referred to Mr. Spina and Mr. Marquart for review.

Open Bids – Nuisance Animal Control Officer: Mr. Same stated one bid was received for Nuisance Animal Control Officer, which is as follows:

Shane Loncosky, 2732 Kingdom Road, Seneca Falls - \$100.00 for each animal dispatched or relocated for a Town property owner, and \$50.00 for set-up and evaluation for each nuisance call where the animal has not been dispatched or relocated.

Mr. Same noted the Board will take this under advisement.

Petitioners:

Linda Solan – Seneca Museum of Waterways & Industry: Linda Solan, Director of the Seneca Museum of Waterways and Industry, stated she is requesting the budgeted amount of \$20,000.00 for the Seneca Museum. She mentioned that they received a NYS Grant for programming, and she gave the Board a copy of the Calendar of Events scheduled for 2008, which includes five large tours already booked for this year. Ms. Solan thanked the Board for its assistance.

