

Is 2008 your year to expand?
Click here for details.



 **PRINT THIS**

THE BUFFALO NEWS

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

North Collins eyes its end as village

By Elmer Ploetz NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Updated: 05/17/08 2:51 PM

The Village of North Collins is considering doing something no other village in Erie County has ever done: disappear.

Mayor John Mrozek and the Village Board plan to take moves leading to a referendum on dissolving the village and merging it into the Town of North Collins.

“We think a single community with a single purpose rather than two governments with perhaps competing agendas is a more effective way of governing,” Mrozek said Friday. “We ought to be more efficient.”

According to Kevin Gaughan, a leading proponent of mergers among local governments, no village has ever been dissolved in Erie County, although there have been votes. Residents of Alden voted to keep their village in 1996.

New York State has urged local governments to share services and merge in recent years, although sharing has been the more popular choice.

But the voters in the Wyoming County Village of Pike voted to merge into the Town of Pike in March.

In North Collins, both the Village Board and Town Board seem to be looking at the potential dissolution of the village into the town as a positive. The two boards met this week to discuss it.

North Collins Supervisor Thomas O’Boyle said he expects the process to be a lengthy one.

“Their consensus and our consensus is it’s probably time to do that,” he said. “But it’s probably a two-year project if they decide to do it.”

Mrozek said the Village Board needs to approve a resolution leading to a referendum on merging the village into the town. The referendum could be as soon as the November elections, but next March’s village elections might

A vertical advertisement for Galaxy Auto Place. At the top, the text "GALAXY AUTO PLACE" is in large, bold, white letters with a red outline. Below this, in yellow text, is "'02-'05 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEES". A black Jeep Grand Cherokee is shown in the background. Below the car, in yellow text, is "\$6995-\$15,995". Further down, in large, bold, red letters, is "GET FINANCED". Below this, in green text, is "2006 JEEP COMMANDERS \$13,995-\$16,995". A silver Jeep Commander is shown in the background. At the bottom, in white text, is "2338 UNION RD. WEST SENECA, NY 716.656.8034".

be a more likely date, he said.

“As much as I want to embrace the change, I also want to be careful and do it properly,” Mrozek said.

The town has no choice in the matter if village residents choose to dissolve their municipality.

Gaughan, who has been touring Erie County municipalities with a slide presentation on reducing board sizes, said he hopes that as many as four other municipalities are on their way to referendums. He declined to identify the villages.

While North Collins’ process is based more on consensus, a referendum would still undoubtedly spark controversy.

Town Clerk Margaret Orrange said she hasn’t seen current numbers, but her studies in the past haven’t shown tax savings from a merger.

“It doesn’t get cheaper, the higher up you go [in municipality size],” Orrange said. “It gets cheaper the lower down you go,” referring to the salaries of village employees, who could be paid at higher town rates if hired for the town work force.

The Village of North Collins has just four full-time employees, three in its Public Works Department and a clerk-treasurer.

The village’s Police Department is all part-time.

O’Boyle said if the village is dissolved, the town wouldn’t need the Police Department. The town offices have recently been moved into a newly renovated site in the village, and a Erie County sheriff’s substation will be going into the new site.

If the merger goes through, village residents would pay for many of the services they now receive through the creation of special districts for such things as water and street lighting.

The village water system would be converted into a water district. Grant funding is being sought for repairs.

Village Trustee Anthony George said the village was created in the first place to offer sewer and water services, and Erie County has already taken over sewer services.

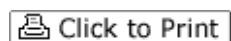
He said that consolidation might not bring huge tax savings, but it would have other advantages.

“We have a lower-income community, and when we start asking for money from the state and the town does the same, we end up competing against each other rather than working together,” George said. “Streamlining services to the residents is where we’re going to see the biggest benefits.”

eploetz@buffnews.com

Find this article at:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/southernsuburbs/story/348810.html>



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

