



THE BUFFALO NEWS

 PRINT THIS

 Click to Print

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

West Seneca to vote on downsizing

By Tom BuckhamNEWS STAFF REPORTER

Updated: 10/21/08 8:15 AM

West Seneca voters will likely get the chance next month to vote on whether to trim the Town Board from five members to two.

The board scheduled a Nov. 17 referendum Monday under mounting pressure from courts and from residents who signed petitions demanding a public vote on the question of downsizing.

It approved a second resolution that allows the special vote to be held next March or April in the unlikely event that a state appellate court delays the vote after hearing arguments in the case Monday in Rochester.

Regionalism advocate Kevin Gaughan, who is pressing municipalities to reduce the number of elected officials in order to ease the burden on taxpayers, called the board's action "a magnificent, magnificent victory for every resident of Erie County."

The West Seneca board approved both resolutions, 4-0, without discussion. Supervisor Wallace Piotrowski was said to be ill and did not attend the packed Town Hall meeting.

"Like a lot of great movements, this one ended not with a bang, but a whimper," Gaughan said afterward, referring to the board's change of heart. Members had opposed the referendum even though the petition drive produced more than 4,300 signatures — well above the number needed to get the issue on the ballot.

Those who advocate shrinking the board wanted the question placed on the Nov. 4 general election ballot, a step County Elections Commissioner Ralph Mohr warned could have led to longer voting lines countywide.

Mohr said 50 of the county's 1,000 voting booths would have to have been set aside to handle the West Seneca referendum.

Though holding the vote two weeks later may increase chances that the downsizing proposal will be rejected, "that doesn't matter to us," Gaughan said. The point is to let the voters decide, he said.

Regardless of the outcome, it will be “just a question of time” before a majority of county residents see the wisdom of shrinking governments — and their tax bills, he said.

The decision to schedule a referendum was greeted with applause and complimentary remarks from most town residents who attended the meeting.

“More is not better,” said John Muscato, who chided the board for ignoring those who signed petitions for more than a month.

“You should obey their request. Give the people the right to say yes or no,” he said.

The issue should have been put on the Nov. 4 ballot, said Frank Boncore. “Who’s going to come out to vote two weeks later?” he said.

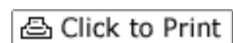
The board’s turnabout came after Associate Appellate Justice Erin M. Peradotto on Friday temporarily lifted the stay of a lower court’s order that the referendum be scheduled.

Peradotto directed the parties to file briefs by today in preparation for Monday’s hearing before the appellate court..

tbuckham@buffnews.com

Find this article at:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/southernsuburbs/story/469709.html>



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

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