



PRESS RELEASE

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City & Town of Batavia Move Forward on Consolidation Plan City Council & Town Board Jointly Support Developing a Plan to Present to the Voters in November, 2009

Batavia, NY -*December 19, 2008*- The City of Batavia and the Town of Batavia today reported the results of a joint public meeting between the City Council and the Town Board held on December 17. The joint meeting was held to receive a report and recommendations prepared by the Center for Governmental Research (CGR). CGR has been engaged to conduct a City and Town Consolidation Study under a Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI) grant funded jointly by the City, the Town, and New York State.

The joint City/Town Consolidation Study Committee supports CGR's report and recommendation to proceed to develop and present a draft consolidation plan to the City Council and Town Board by July, 2009. If the plan is approved by the two elected bodies, the plan could be presented to the voters of the City and Town in the November, 2009 general election.

CGR and the Committee made a presentation to the joint meeting of elected officials to discuss the initial recommendation. The Study Committee will begin to develop the plan starting in January, and agreed to update the joint boards every few months, to ensure that the process is open and transparent. At the end of the presentation, the joint boards applauded the Study Committee for its work to date, and endorsed moving forward as discussed.

Charles Zettek Jr., CGR's project Director, noted that there are several key factors that are aligning in favor of consolidating the City and the Town at this time. These factors include: 1. the severe fiscal crisis that is going to drive changes to keep costs as low as possible, 2. new financial incentives from the State to consolidate local governments, 3. strong support by the City Council President and the Town

Supervisor, and 4. recent events that have shown that consolidation works and benefits the greater community.

“There is no question that if the City and Town of Batavia become a single new government, this will put Batavia in the national spotlight” Zettek said. “Everyone recognizes that fragmented local governments in New York and across the northeast and Midwest are inefficient. Communities across the country will look to Batavia as being the best example of how to consolidate a city and town to create an efficient government designed for the 21’st century” Zettek said.

City Council President Charlie Mallow summarized the consensus of the two boards by saying “Both boards want to develop a detailed consolidation plan that can be presented to the voters next fall.” “We both realize that consolidating the City and Town will provide significant cost savings that will reduce taxes” Mallow said. “The plan will spell out specifically how services will be provided, how much will be saved and other efficiencies.”

Town Supervisor Greg Post stated, “If you look at the master plan that was done 40 years ago, it viewed the Town and City as one community. Now we have the opportunity to make that vision a reality.”

City Manager Jason Molino told the joint boards that the Committee is going to have an incredibly busy six months, reviewing all the operations and coming up with a plan to present to City Council and the Town Board.” “However, the end result will be a definite plan so that the voters will have the facts and options they need to decide if they want to create a new consolidated government”.

Members of the Study Committee are:

Beverly Mancuso

Jeff Scott

Lynn Freeman

Steve Lockwood

Steve Mountain

Jason Molino

Sally Kuzon