Government Reorganization Feasibility Study for the Village of Medina and Surrounding Towns

May, 2011

Prepared for:

The Village of Medina in cooperation with the Towns of Ridgeway and Shelby

Prepared By:

Medina-Ridgeway-Shelby Study Committee
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the past year the Medina-Ridgeway-Shelby Study Committee has been exploring options and identifying viable alternatives for increasing government efficiency. This is our final report[1] to the boards of the three local governments and to the greater community, but it is only sets the stage for what we envision will be a three-step, multi-year process.

Our major recommendations to the joint boards are to take the following steps:

1. Continue pushing for enhanced shared services, in line with – but extending beyond – what is being done by our local governments today.

   - Key examples are to: 1) establish a shared approach to economic development; 2) establish one water/sewer department for operations; 3) consolidate water billing; 4) have a joint planning/zoning/code enforcement process.

   - Establish the infrastructure needed to achieve these shared services. The foundation for the infrastructure must be determined through cross-government inter-municipal agreements (IMAs) negotiated and approved by the Boards of the Village and the Towns.

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[1] There is a companion executive summary to this report entitled *Government Reorganization Feasibility Study for the Towns of Ridgeway and Shelby*. Except for having a different title and NYS Local Government Efficiency (LGE) grant number (T-088813) it is identical to this executive summary. The titles are different to meet state requirements, since the study was funded with two separate LGE grants.

2. Move toward having Medina, Ridgeway and Shelby become a single entity. This is a unanimous recommendation of the Study Committee. If the elected boards agree with the Committee's recommendation and wish to proceed toward having one consolidated government entity, the local governments will need to do further study to work out the details of what to present to voters as a plan for the consolidated entity. This plan should have a high level of detail that will answer many of the implementation questions posed by the community. This plan will also allow voters to understand exactly what a consolidated entity would look like and what changes would be made. Voters in the Village and in each Town must approve the plan in order for it to take effect.

3. The third step, assuming the voters in Medina, Ridgeway and Shelby approve the consolidation plan, is to take approximately one year to eighteen months to carry out all the steps necessary to create the single unified consolidated government.

Based upon the experience of other communities, it is likely the Step 2 study will take about a year from the time it is started to present the plan to the voters. If voters approve the plan it is likely that it will be another 12-18 months before the current Towns and Village cease to exist and the new consolidated entity takes effect.

Thus, this feasibility study represents just the first year of what could be a three-to-four year process.

Our final report is presented in sections that match the sequence of reports as they were given to the community by the Committee. During the past year, we presented the following work products to the community, both through the project web site and in public forums.

- *What Exists Report* – an overview of how the municipalities currently provide services

- *Appendices to the What Exists Report*

    o Map of parcels with double tax for fire service

    o CGR memorandum on courts

    o Comparison of Village DPW and Shelby and Ridgeway highway contracts

    o Inventory of DPW and Highway equipment as provided by the municipalities

    o 2008-2010 budget information for the Village and Towns

- o *PowerPoint Presentation to the Public on What Exists*

- *Options Report* – an outline of alternatives for delivering services and functions

- *Appendices to the Options Report*

  - o Sub-committee reports

    - DPW-Highway

    - Fire /Ambulance

    - Economic Development/Water/Sewer (including a key memorandum of understanding reached between Medina and Shelby)

    - Police (including response of the Orleans County Sheriff regarding providing service in the Village)

    - Building Usage (including a limited analysis of the estimated fair market value of the Village Clerk's Building and the Ridgeway Town Hall and also cost estimates and architectural drawings for proposed changes to "City Hall")

  - o Sample IMAs from other local governments in NYS

  - o Overview Chart of Codes and Laws

  - o *PowerPoint Presentation to the Public on Options* – the final slides summarize public comments from the April 26, 2011 public forum

  - o *Other Community Feedback*

    - Summary of public comments made at the May 12, 2011 public forum

    - Public feedback the Committee received via the website, email, standard mail, or comment forms.

To conclude, the Committee is now handing off to each of the Boards this report, which is the culmination of a tremendous amount of work from the folks listed in the Acknowledgements. We sincerely hope that this report will provide a useful strategic planning framework for the three Boards and that it will help the Boards work together to build a stronger, more vibrant community as we move forward into the 21st century.

Acknowledgements

Between spring 2010 and spring 2011, the members of the Medina-Ridgeway-Shelby Study Committee put in a tremendous amount of personal time to explore viable options for improving delivery of government services to residents and taxpayers of the greater community. Committee members follow:

Medina
Ann Bunch
Don Colquhoun
Charlie Slack
Adam Tabelski, Mayor
Alternate: Andrew Meier, Deputy Mayor

Ridgeway
Patty Blackburn
Nelda Callard
Rosalind Lind
Jeffrey Toussaint, Councilman
Alternate: Robin Gardner, Councilman

Shelby
Merle Draper, Supervisor
Lawrence Fox
Nathan Pace *(Committee Chair)*
Howard Watts
Alternate: Ken Schaal, Deputy Supervisor

Six other individuals also provided key support to specific sub-committees appointed by the full Committee. They are:

- Gabrielle Barone – *Economic Development/Water/Sewer*
- Gary Blackburn – *DPW/Highway*
- Mark D'Alba AIA – *Building Usage (re: renovations to "City Hall")*
- Ed Houseknecht – *DPW/Highway*
- James Watson – *Building Usage (limited analysis of fair market value of Ridgeway Town Hall and Village Clerk's Building)*
- James Whipple – *Economic Development/Water/Sewer*

In addition to the above six individuals, we thank an Orleans County employee for providing a tremendous amount of information critical to the study – and doing so in an especially timely manner:

- Dawn Allen, Director, Orleans County Real Property Office

The Study Committee and CGR gratefully acknowledge the support we received from municipal employees and the leaders of the community's independent fire companies as we gathered data and information. Although it is not possible to name the many, many employees and fire volunteers who contributed, we especially thank four individuals who went above and beyond to assist us in our work.

They are:
- Brian Napoli, Ridgeway Supervisor
- Peggy Crowley, Village Clerk-Treasurer
- Lynne Johnson, Ridgeway Bookkeeper
- Traci Culver, Shelby Bookkeeper

The Study Committee appreciates all of the many contributions that were made as the Medina-Ridgeway-Shelby community charts a path to the future.

CGR Staff Team

Project Director – Charles Zettek Jr., Vice President and Director of Government Management Services

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Website Development – Katherine Bell, Information Systems Manager; Hung Dang, Research Assistant

Project Support – Michael Silva, Research Associate; Hannah Griese, Research Assistant