

## A Message to the Community of North Collins

It has been said that a journey begins with a successful first step.

Well, the Village of North Collins has now taken that initial step as it begins to explore the possibilities of changing the structure of government in the Village and potentially in the Town.

The Village was recently awarded a grant through New York State's Local Government Efficiency (LGE) grant program to determine – through a feasibility study whether consolidating services, merging services or dissolution would serve the community of North Collins in a more efficient and effective manner.

The Village reviewed proposals from 3 consulting firms and chose the Center for Governmental Research (CGR – based in Rochester, NY) to spearhead the study. The feasibility committee is a cross-section of local residents (Village and Town) and members of both local governments.

The members include:

1. Larry Wroblewski
2. Anthony George
3. Mrs. Rosalind Seege
4. Mrs. Lisa Williams
5. Marty Niefergold
6. Mrs. Marian Vanni
7. Mrs. Mary Ann Peterson
8. Richard Schaus
9. Mrs. Brenda Bauer-Petrus
10. John Mrozek

CGR's team includes Mr. Scott Sittig and Mr. Charles Zettek.

The purpose of the committee is to examine the information gathered, objectively determine the implications of the data (both short and long-term) and present a completed report to the Village Board by approximately January 2010.

The committee met for its first meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting we established a plan of action, reviewed a "sample" survey and created a schedule of meeting dates for both the committee and the North Collins community.

All meetings are open to the public and, as scheduled, will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Committee meetings will be held at the North Collins Village Hall and community meetings will be held at the North Collins Junior-Senior High School auditorium.

It is our goal to involve as many of the stakeholders in this process as is possible. The theme, if I may speak for the committee is to be transparent, communicative and to look at this process as objectively as we can. To borrow a phrase: "information becomes knowledge and knowledge becomes power – when it is communicated effectively."

**This past week, (August 3<sup>rd</sup>) step 2 of the process was begun. Interviews of some of the key municipal employees and public officials took place. The interviews examined current practices, reviewed staffing considerations, explored the current budgets and an evaluation of assets and liabilities presently held (by both the Village and Town).**

**On August 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. the committee will hold its inaugural public meeting (7:00 p.m. at the North Collins Junior-Senior High School auditorium) during which we will outline the steps to be taken and the time frames for each. We will also preview the survey format to be utilized and our effort to achieve a statistically reliable survey result from both the Village and Town residents. In order to achieve this we will be incorporating a phone survey and the local Pennysaver and the Village newsletter.**

**On a more personal level, discussions about change and the potential for them to occur oftentimes result in very strong opinions and emotions. That is a natural reaction for most human beings. In this particular scenario, the Village has chosen to explore a most unique direction.**

**What I most hope for is that before you make your own personal decision you join us for all (or some) of the meetings to hear first-hand information rather than speculation or rumor.**

**Get involved in your future and be part of something really special.**

**As always,**

**John**