

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORTH HORSELL VILLAGE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2004

Mayor Stephen Terry called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Attendance: Mayor Terry
Trustees: W.Coleman, John Falci, W.McNelis
Mike Hattery
Village Clerk: M. Heers

PAY BILLS

The bills were paid on a motion by J. Falci, second by W. Coleman and carried.

Mayor Terry announced the reasons why we did this study:

When I ran for Mayor I said we were going to look into this, and then we did a straw vote and the residents decided they also wanted to do this study. We are doing it now so we have time to analyze this, while things are good here in the Village, we are in no hurry to jump either way. There are future major expenses to be faced in the coming years and these have to be taken into consideration. Our goal is to have a non-binding vote in January.

Mayor Terry introduced Mike Hattery of the Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mr. Hattery passed out a summary of the municipals options study that he did under the Cornell Local Government Program. (Summary a part of these minutes)

Mr. Hattery noted that he tried to be fair and balanced with what he had written and tried to make a fair assessment but did not make any recommendations This type of study has been done before once in 1972 and again in 1992

The options studied and explained were the following:

Village to remain as is, Village constrained/without the pilot payment we now receive and if we are charged for sewer treatment, Town/Village coterminous, contracting with the City of Hornell for public works, 24/7 Police and fire services, Village dissolution, and merger with the City.

The last was looked at in the 1992 study, in state law there is no way for a village and city to merge. I have had legislators tell me if two communities wanted this, the local state representatives could put forth special legislation in order for this to take place

Mrs. Johnson: Explain village dissolution.

Mr. Hattery: The village would no longer exist and all service delivery becomes the responsibility of the Town. Existing debt on water and sewer would have to be retired by just the village residents, would not be spread over the Town

Mayor Terry: If we had to fix Seneca Road and it was going to cost a million to do it right and we could dissolve and go to the town and say fix Seneca Road.

Mr. Hattery: You would be at their mercy whether they fixed it or not.

Mr. Giles: If we went to the City would the Town have any say in it?

Mr.Hattery: I would say yes.

Mr.Hattery reported that he had a question about debt situation, while he did not include anything in the report but do have some figures as of fiscal year ending 2002, debt would be \$455 per capita in the Village and \$600 per capita in the City.

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Mrs. Poplawski: If we merge with the city would there be a committee formed to decide what we want and what we reject?

Mr. Hattery: The two Boards agree on a committee and their whole purpose is to create a merger plan. Assuming they could come up with a plan that is suitable to both Boards, then it would go to ballot. If either municipality turned it down it would not happen.

Phil D'Amato: why do you feel there would be an improvement in the fire service in a merger with the City?

Hattery: I estimate it would improve response time.

Mrs. Johnson: If the Village were to merge with the City there is no going back two years down the line if we don't like it.

Hattery: Good point. If you see some advantages to it, you have to balance it with against control that you lose.

Mayor Terry: If we do not do anything your taxes are going up 14 or 15 percent. The taxes are heading north

Trustee Coleman: What is the burden on the City to take over a village our size?

Hattery: They will have increased costs based on their need for additional personnel and equipment.

Mr. Hattery: Another question that came up is what impact would merger have on real estate values and appraised values. I interview some people and I find that place and names are important, but the to assess the economic value of that, it has been done but mostly with new communities. One of the things a merger bill would include is to have a hamlet designation, maintaining real strong name recognition.

Mayor Terry: Our pilot runs out in 2015 and the sewer agreement ends in 2016. We will need to re-do Seneca Road and before that is done we need to replace water lines from the north end of the village down to the Village hall

Mr. Libordi: When we resurface Seneca Road what kind of help can we expect from the Town?

Mayor Terry: You mean money, there is no money.

Giles: What about grants?

Mayor Terry: You try to get a grant, how distressed are you when you are sitting on a \$120,000 reserve.

Mayor Terry: How do we want to vote, do it over a couple of days or have it on one night, for registered voters. Who is going to vote? We can set the date at the December meeting for January.

After much discussion, it was decided to limit it to registered voters and to hold it one day from noon to 8:00 P.M., absentee ballots will be allowed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M. on a motion by J. Falci, second by W.McNelis and carried.