

[TOWN OF CLIFTON & TOWN OF FINE LETTERHEAD]

**TOWNS OF CLIFTON AND FINE LAUNCH EFFICIENCY/CONSOLIDATION PROJECT WEBSITE
RESIDENTS CAN STAY INFORMED AS STUDY UNFOLDS**

Clifton-Fine, NY – February __, 2015 – A new web page specifically designed to help residents stay informed of developments as the Towns of Clifton and Fine efficiency /consolidation study progresses, is now active. The Towns' consultant, the Development Authority of the North Country is hosting the webpage on their existing website. The webpage (<http://www.danc.org/operations/engineering/clifton-fine-efficiencyconsolidation-study>) has been launched by the Towns' appointed Efficiency/Consolidation Study Committee to ensure the Towns' residents have access to all of the information and materials being considered by the study committee.

The Towns' appointed Efficiency/Consolidation Committee consists of Town Supervisors (Chuck Hooven and Mark Hall), Clifton Town councilman Cory Perrault, Fine Town councilman Brian Donovan, Clifton Highway Superintendent Kelly Smith, Fine Highway Superintendent Roger Folsom, Clifton residents Jerry Cooper and Bill Reil, and Fine residents Sherm Craig and Chris Westbrook. The committee will conduct public informational meetings and a public hearing on the final Efficiency/Consolidation Study, Plan and Alternatives. At each stage of the process additional information will be available on the website.

In an effort to reduce taxpayer burdens, the Town Boards decided to review current operations to improve efficiencies and investigate consolidation. Town populations have been declining, businesses have closed, and there is a loss of financial resources making it increasingly difficult for the Towns to provide municipal services at reasonable costs. Many government functions being provided by the Towns are already shared including a jointly owned municipal arena and golf course. Since 1950, the Town of Clifton and Fine have experienced a 31% decline in population and lost over 2,000 jobs and 75% of its students with the closure of J&L, Newton Falls Pulp & Paper Mill, and other local businesses that supported the manufacturing based economy. The Town Boards have also observed the Village of Edwards dissolution process unfold resulting in the Village's dissolution in 2012 and have also observed the ongoing study that is taking place in the Village of Hermon; both neighboring communities in St. Lawrence county with similar issues.

The Town Boards applied for a \$25,000 Citizen Reorganization Empowerment Grant. The New York State Department of State awarded the grant to the Towns in November 2014. The grant will cover 50% of the cost of the \$50,000 Efficiency/Consolidation Study and the remaining cost of the study will be split evenly between each Town.

The Towns have engaged the Development Authority of the North Country to complete the study. The Efficiency/Consolidation Study Committee will be working on preparing a report that will satisfy grant requirements: to develop a detailed Efficiency/Consolidation Study with a recommended Consolidation Plan and Alternatives to Consolidation which answers questions that Town residents have about the consolidation process, impacts of consolidation, and how consolidating would affect residents and local

governments. The final deliverable will be transmitted to the Town Boards for approval. The entire process is expected to take about 18 – 24 months and is slated to be completed in 2016.

If the study indicates consolidation is beneficial and both town boards independently adopt a resolution calling for a referendum on the proposed consolidation, a “Referendum for Consolidation” would be presented to the registered voters of each town. Voters of each town would have to independently, by majority vote, approve the consolidation for it to take place.

The committee asks for everyone’s cooperation during this process. It is important that the study provides accurate information so the best results are advanced for the Clifton-Fine Community.