

Town of Clifton & Town of Fine

Efficiency/Consolidation Study Committee Meeting

Meeting #16 – 5/25/2016 @ 6:00 p.m. @ the Town of Fine Municipal Building

Minutes

1. Attendees:

Committee Members: Jared Cooper (C), Joe DeMart (C), Roger Folsom (F), Chuck Hooven (C), Kelly Smith (C); AD Burr “Butch” Brown (F), Sherm Craig (F), Chris Westbrook (F), Sue Westbrook

Guests: Carol Ait Yassine (C), Alberta Hartman (F), Kevin Schwenzfeier (DOS), Robert Roeckle (DOS)

Consultants: Star Carter (DANC), Carrie Tuttle (DANC),

2. Objectives of this Meeting: Review Draft Alternatives Report and confirm date for public meeting #2. Carrie went over the Draft Report and the Committee provided some general comments/discussion and specific edits to include in the final draft report that will be presented at the Public Informational Meeting in July. Committee members will have the June meeting to make any final edits to the report before the Draft is finalized for presentation to the public in July. The following notes summarize the discussion.

- Carrie reminded the Committee that all of the information in these reports will be summarized in a tri-fold informational “one-pager” that will be easy for the public to read and understand. This will be developed at the end of the study when not further changes will be made.
- The Town of Clifton will formally review its Committee membership at their next meeting and some members that are not active may be removed.
- Butch commented that the final report clarify that the public may contact Committee members if they have questions or concerns.
- Butch commented that the savings for software have been mentioned, but questioned whether there are costs for switching systems. Carol (Bookkeeper in Clifton) said there wouldn’t be any additional costs for adding additional town info into software program.
- Butch commented that the Code Enforcement Officer salary was based on comparable salaries in other Towns. Butch says the Code Enforcement Officer has just recently starting issuing tickets and there may be more costs involved for that position in the future. The level of activeness of the Code Enforcement Officer is different in each town, and the salary that was decided on by the Committee is fair and justifiable as compared to other towns in St. Lawrence County.
- The Committee discussed that there are going to be some variances (pluses and minuses as compared to projections); however, the Committee should focus on the overall picture and the savings assumptions were made on the conservative side, so as to not overstate savings.

- Clarify that Tax Savings tables include only Town and Highway taxes; not special districts, County, or School taxes.
- Mark and Chris are working on a summary of the personnel capacity issues that are a qualitative issue that should be discussed in the report. Many of the same people are on the multiple boards and volunteering their time to fill these positions and it's sometimes difficult to find people to serve.
- Rob commented that the reference for Town Justice. Any 2 or more towns with contiguous boundaries can establish a single town court and reduce the number of Justices. This is an option if the Towns do not consolidate and the Committee wants to put this option in the report.
- The Committee requested that the assessment consolidation incentive does not require a revaluation. Star will call again to confirm.
- Correction on Page 5: Bookkeeper - 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, third word needs to be changed.
- Bookkeeper Services: Carol commented that if the Towns consolidate, there will definitely be a need for 1 full time and 1 part-time, due to the workload. Change 1 "part-time" to 1 "half-time" to clarify that position. The Bookkeeper does accounts payables for special districts and general accounts, not receivable (take out receivable).
- Sherm commented about the possibility of having the Town Justice in Cranberry Lake instead of having it in Star Lake. At the April meeting it was discussed that the Cranberry Lake building is not handicap accessible, the Fine room is larger and better set up, and the Star Lake building is more centrally located. There was discussion about how the Clifton Community Center in Cranberry Lake could be better utilized for the Library, Post Office, and Historian's office, by enhancing that space for those services and making it handicap accessible. Part of the funds from the implementation grant can be used to improve the handicap accessibility of the Cranberry Building.
- Page 8: Buildings - remove "at this time" to clarify that no recommendations are being made to close any buildings in the Towns.
- Page 14: Change section 3 to say Effects on Special Districts. Remove sentence about Newton Falls Fire District changes are likely since the status is unknown at this time.
- Page 15: clarify that the projections are based on 2014 data.
- Page 16: non CETC savings amount will change based on new numbers Carrie received from Carol which quantify savings from phone, internet and fax lines at ~\$3,009.24 per year.
- Page 17: Does the Committee want to use the median taxable assessed value for residential property or the average? Committee decided to add both median and average to the paragraph in the report that quantifies property tax savings.
- Rob mentioned that School Tax may change in a consolidated town because the equalization rates are not the same between the two towns. Carrie will calculate the new school tax rate so this can be clarified in the report. Star reviewed the school tax rates in each town and they are \$12.12 for Clifton and \$13.77 for Fine per \$1,000 of assessed value, which is fairly close so impacts should be minimal.
- Joe suggested adding a paragraph that states that the figures in this report are projections and the Committee's best estimation of projected savings but it's impossible to compute exact, future numbers. Committee agreed to add language to this effect in to the report.
- Page 18: change "Summary" to "Executive Summary" and move to the front of the document.
- Rob mentioned that municipalities have the option to allow Absentee Ballots for a referendum vote. Joe commented that Clifton has a large seasonal registered voter base and

recommended that referendum allow absentee ballots. Chuck mentioned that absentee ballots for referendums are expensive if not done in conjunction with general election. The Committee is concerned that they want to make sure that every registered voter has a chance to vote so it may be worth the added cost. Rob mentioned that the Towns should be consistent; whatever their final decision is regarding absentee ballots.

- For the next Committee meeting, Carrie will have a draft presentation for the public meeting that the Committee can review/discuss. Included in this presentation will be “Next Steps”, and a summary of the updated Draft Alternatives Report. Carrie will also prepare an outline of the Implementation Plan and a draft Press Release for the Public Informational Meeting #2 to go over at the June Committee meeting.
- The Committee would like to have a meeting in July after the public informational meeting. The Public Meeting will tentatively be on July 20 - Carrie will check with the school on this date. Committee meeting would be July 27.

### Future Meeting Schedule

Kick Off Meeting	January 28, 2015
Demographics & Taxes	February 25, 2015
Services Provided: Highway Department Part I	March 25, 2015
Services Provided: Highway Department Part II	April 22, 2015
Services Provided: Fire Department	May 27, 2015
Services Provided: General Fund Town Services – Library, Arena, Golf Course, Dog Control, Court, etc.	June 24, 2015
Services Provided: Water/Sewer	July 22, 2015
Personnel	August 26, 2015
Finances and Budgets	September 23, 2015
Review Draft "Existing Conditions/What Exist" Report & Plan for Public Informational Meeting #1	November 23, 2015
Review PowerPoint and Draft "Existing Conditions/What Exist" Report for Public Informational Meeting #1	January 4, 2016
Informational Meeting #1	January 6, 2016
Evaluation of Alternatives	January 27, 2016
Evaluation of Alternatives - Wages & Benefits	February 24, 2016
Evaluation of Alternatives - Contractual Expenses, Other Efficiency Improvements & Tax Credits	March 23, 2016
Evaluation of Alternatives – Quantify Other Efficiency Improvements, Evaluate Alternatives outside of town consolidation	April 27, 2016
Evaluation of Alternatives – Draft Report	May 25, 2016

<b>Evaluation of Alternatives – Finalize Draft Report and Prep for 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting</b>	<b>June 22, 2016</b>
Public Informational Meeting #2	July 20, 2016
Committee Meeting - Debrief after Public Meeting	July 27, 2016 (Tentative)
Implementation Plan - Recommendations & Final Report	August 2016
Public Information Meeting/Hearing	September 2016