
**A Study of Shared Service
Opportunities for the
Village and Town of
Cobleskill, NY**

**Prepared by
Center for Governmental Research, Inc.**

Public Forum – June 5, 2008

- Agenda
 - Introduction
 - Overview of Municipalities
 - Overview of Current Issues
 - Review of Options
 - Next Steps
 - Community Feedback

CGR Staff Team

- Project Director
 - Charles Zettek, Jr. – Director of Government Management Services
- Research Staff
 - Scott Sittig – Senior Research Associate
 - Katherine Corley – Research Assistant

Cobleskill Study Committee

- Village Members
 - Mayor Michael Sellers
 - John O'Donnell
- Town Members
 - Kenneth Hotopp
 - Ruth Bradt
- Regular Observers of the Process
 - Town Supervisor Roger Cohn and previously Mike Montario

Purpose of Study

- Village applied for SMSI grant
 - As of 2008-09 NYS Budget they will be known as Local Government Efficiency Grants (LGEG)
- Study shared service opportunities between Town and Village of Cobleskill
- Baseline of options from small to large up to and including full consolidation of the two municipalities

Review of Project Timeline

- Kickoff meeting in August of 2007
- Collected data during the fall through early January
- Public meeting in December 2007
- Compiled data and proposed alternatives to study committee in March 2008
- Public forum in June to review options
- Comment period through June 20, 2008
- Final draft end of June

Survey Results

- Statistically Inconclusive – 22 Surveys Received

Should this sector be consolidated?					
Sector	Total responses	Yes	Maybe	No	Other
Planning, Zoning & Code Enforcement	18	10	6	2	
Administration & Governance	17	11	2	4	
Water & Sewer	17	12*	2	3	
Courts	15	13	1	1	
Police	15	8*	5	2	
Highway	15	11	1	1	2#
Parks	9	7	1	1	

* Most "Yes" votes are for expansion of territory or new business arrangement with town; few are for simple consolidation

"Other" votes suggest elected, not appointed highway supervisor

Overview of Municipalities

Community Comparison

- Roughly 1150 of village population are SUNY students who live on campus.

	Village	TOV	Town
Land Area (sq. miles)	3.3	27.5	30.8
Population (2000)	4,590	1,821	6,411
Population (2006 est.)	4,632	1,916	6,548
2007 Tax Levy	\$1,788,480	\$620,879	
Per Capita Costs	\$386	\$324	

Population Trend

- Village population has been close to or above 70% of the total Town population since 1950.
- Without the college students (1150), the Village population is roughly 65% of the total Town population.
- Peak population was in 1990 but Village population as a percentage of the Town population peaked in 1980.

Table 2: Population of Cobleskill, NY

	1900	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2006 Est.
<i>Village</i>	2,327	3,208	3,471	4,368	5,272	5,268	4,590	4,632
<i>Town</i>	3,973	4,709	4,964	6,017	7,048	7,270	6,411	6,548
<i>Village %</i>	59%	68%	70%	73%	75%	72%	72%	71%

Cost of Governments

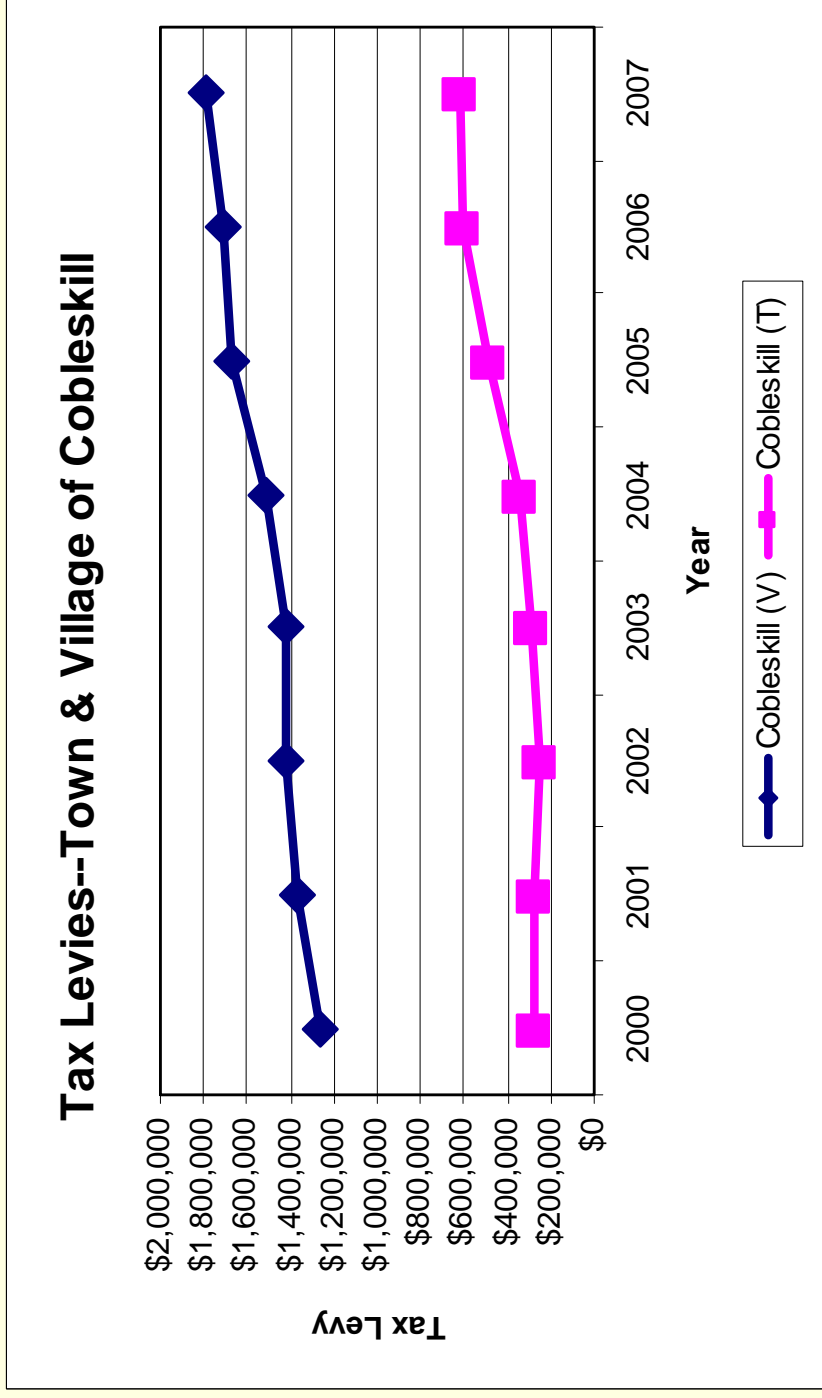
- Village – 2006 Actual Expense per OSC
 - General = \$2,569,403
 - Water = \$605,909
 - Sewer = \$1,158,668
 - Total = \$4,333,980
- Village – 2006 “*Non Property Tax*” Revenue per OSC
 - General = \$925,101
 - Water = \$691,415
 - Sewer = \$964,896
- 2006 Tax Levy Per OSC = \$1,711,309
 - Levy is based upon budget, not actual

Cost of Governments (2)

- Town – 2006 Actual Expense Per OSC
 - Townwide = \$580,020
 - Town Outside Village = \$254,399
 - Special Fire District = \$73,983
- Town – 2006 “*Non Property Tax*” Revenue per OSC
 - Townwide = \$229,760
 - Town Outside Village = \$136,030
 - Special Fire District = \$180
- 2006 Town Tax Levy Per OSC
 - Townwide = \$504,988
 - Town Outside Village = \$101,433
 - Special Fire District = \$73,434
 - Levy is based upon budget, not actual

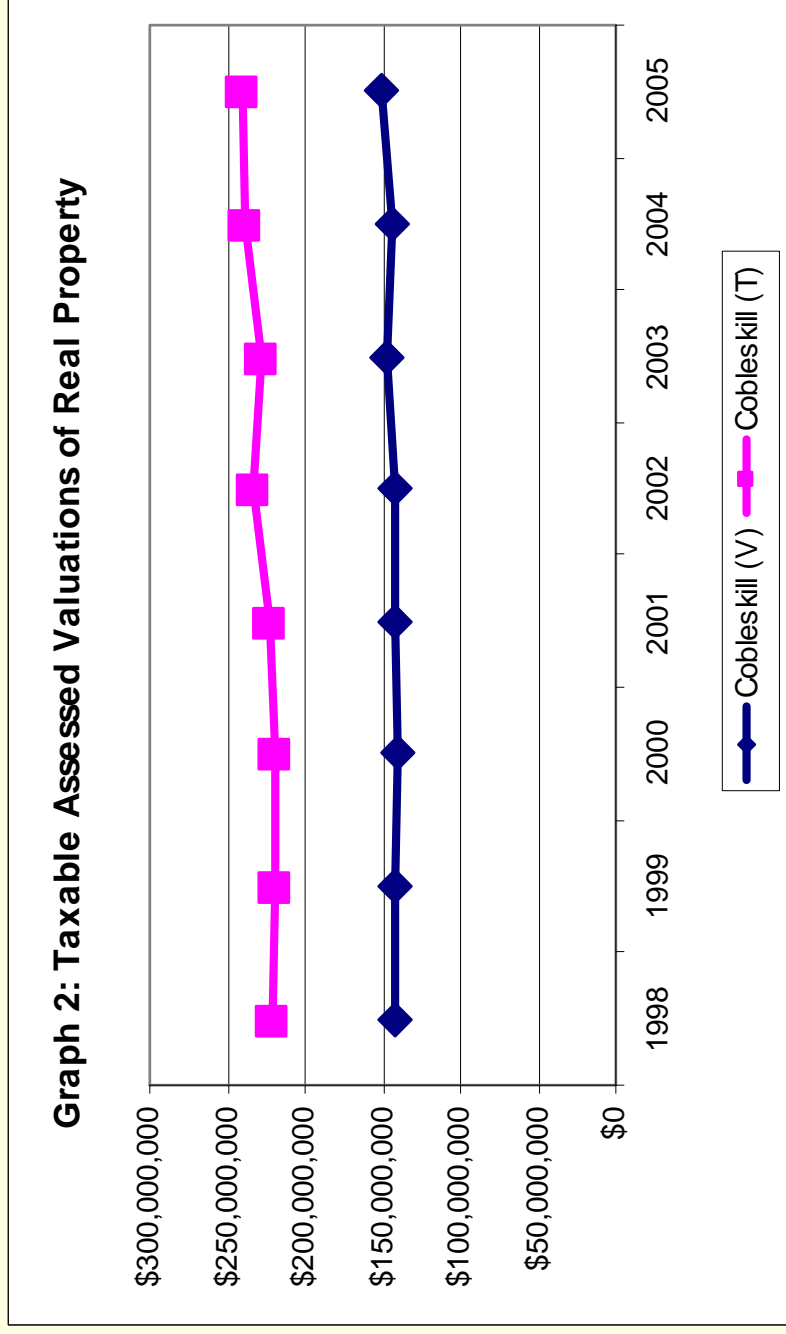
Trends in Tax Levy

- 2006 Combined Tax Levy = \$2.3 Million
- 2007 Combined Tax Levy = \$2.4 Million



Trend in Taxable Assessed Valuation

- From 1998-2005, the village average taxable assessed valuation as a percentage of the entire town was 63%.



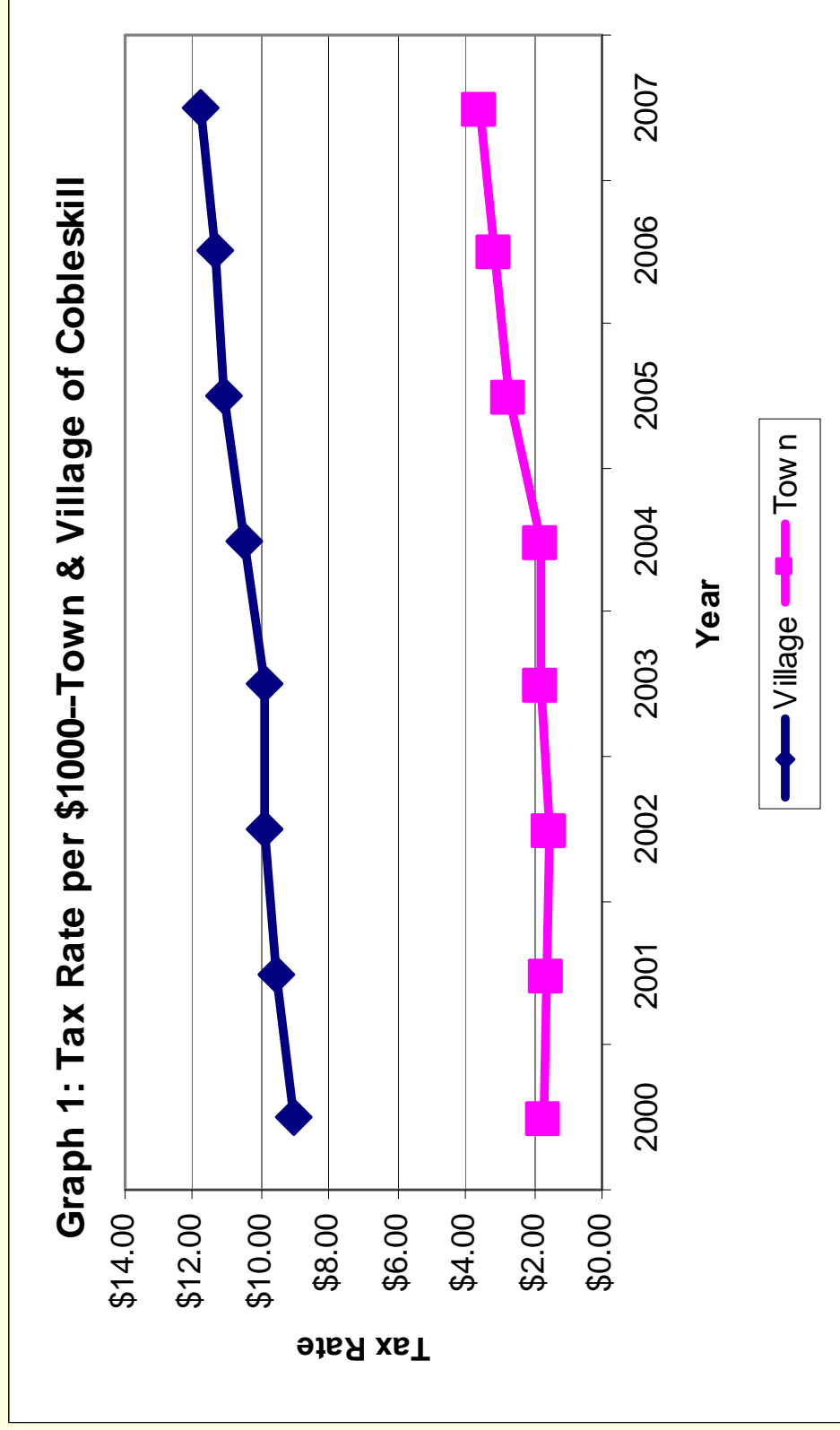
Tax Rate Analysis

- 2006 Village Tax rate ranked in the 53rd percentile among all NYS Village tax rates.
- 2006 Town Tax rate ranked in the 27th percentile among all NYS Town tax rates.

Location	Tax Rate	State Median	Rank	Percentile
Town	\$3.17	\$5.15	254/930	27%
Village	\$11.37	\$10.24	347/654	53%

** All Tax rates are per \$1000 of Assessed Value*

Tax Rate Analysis (2)



Miscellaneous Fiscal Facts

- In 2007 the village exhausted 46.5% of it's constitutional taxing limit.
 - In 2006 the percentage was 42.7%.
 - 2006 average for villages across the state was 26.1%.
- 45% of village property is tax exempt.



Overview of Functional Service Areas

Functional Service Analysis

- Administration
- Courts
- Planning and Zoning
- Police
- Fire and Rescue
- Highway and DPW
- Refuse
- Parks and Recreation
- Water & Sewer

Administration

- Village – Total 2006 Expense \$345,507
 - Located on Mineral Springs Road
 - 1 elected PT Mayor
 - 4 elected Village Board Members
 - 1 FT appointed Clerk/Treasurer
 - 1 FT appointed Deputy Clerk
 - 1 appointed PT Senior Account Clerk/Typist
 - Clerks serve as administrative support for Water and Sewer

Administration (2)

- Town Hall – Total 2006 Expense \$200,066
 - Located on Route 7 near I-88 exit
 - 1 PT elected Town Supervisor
 - 4 PT elected Town Board Members
 - 1 FT elected Town Clerk
 - 1 FT appointed Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector
 - 1 PT Dog Control Officer (Serves Village)
 - 1 PT Assessor (Serves Village)

Courts

- Village – 2006 Expense \$88,993 (2% Budget)
- 2006 Revenue = \$86,691
- 1 Elected PT Justice, 1 Acting PT Justice
- 1 FT appointed Court Clerk
- 60% of Court Activity between Town and Village occurs in the village court (70% of that activity is related to Vehicle and Traffic)

Courts (2)

- Town – 2006 Expense \$36,370 (4% Budget)
- 2006 Revenue = \$44,179
- 2 Elected PT Justices
- 1 PT appointed Court Clerk
- 90% of Activity is Vehicle and Traffic

Code Enforcement

- Village – 2006 Expense \$149,625 (3% Budget)
 - 1 FT Code Enforcement Officer
 - 1 FT Administrative Assistant
 - 1 Highway Person doing GIS Part Time
- Town – 2006 Expense \$34,063 (4% Budget)
 - 1 PT Code Enforcement Officer

Planning & Zoning

- Village
 - 1 Volunteer Planning Board
 - 1 Volunteer Zoning Board of Appeals
- Town – 2006 Actual Expense = \$18,584
 - 1 PT Planning Board Secretary
 - 1 Planning Board (Nominal Fee for Service)
 - 1 Voluntary Zoning Board of Appeals

Police

- 2006 Expense \$855,556
 - 20% of Expense with W & S Combined
 - 33% of General Fund Expense (Minus W & S)
- Staffing (As of March 2008)
 - 1 Chief
 - 1 Investigator
 - 2 Sergeants
 - 8 Patrol Officers
 - 1 PT Administrative Support

Police (2)

- Dispatch
 - 911 Handled by County
 - Village maintains direct access 211 during business hours only
- # Incidents Handled in 2006 = 5375
 - Incidents handled in 2007 increased by 30% over 2006

Fire and Rescue

- Village
 - 2006 Expense \$75,866 (2% of General Fund)
 - Village responsible for building & equipment
 - All Volunteer
 - Village offers Ambulance Services
 - Contracts with Cobleskill/Seward/Richmondville Fire Protection District
- Town Outside of Village 2006 Expense = \$73,983
- Total Cost apportioned by weighted average of population and full assessed valuation

Highway and DPW

- Consolidated Operation covered by Shared Service Agreement
- Village – 2006 Expense \$779,759 (30% of general fund budget expense)
 - Shared Highway Superintendent (50% Cost)
 - Superintendent Appointed Position
 - Unified Operation with Town
 - Located at Town Barn
 - Each municipality responsible for own staff
- Town – 2006 Expense \$460,186 (50% of total town general fund expenses)

Refuse

- Service only in Village – Residents and commercial in TOV contract with private haulers.
- Current Cost of Contract \$255,990
 - Only serve residential customers in village
 - Line item in general fund and figured into property tax levy
 - Changed carriers in 2007 due to bid process after citation from DOL concerning prevailing wage requirement
 - Former Carrier picked up all refuse regardless of residential/commercial status

Parks and Recreation

- Village
 - 2006 Expense \$20,000 (< 1% General Fund)
- Town
 - 2006 Expense \$42,697 (5% of Total)
- Joint Recreation Commission between Town and Village established in 1974
 - 4 Appointed Town and 5 Appointed Village Representatives serve on the Commission
 - 1 PT Recreation Coordinator
 - Some Seasonal Support Staff

Water

- 2006 Expense \$605,909
 - 14% of Village Budget (Including Sewer)
 - Capacity is 2 Million Gallons Day (MGD)
 - Currently Running at 500,000 MGD
 - Serves Village and some outside of Village
 - Water District #1 (60 Users + High school)
 - Village will not sell/extend without annexation
 - Town willing to allow annexation until last year
 - Residential usage was 74% in Village
 - SUNY represented 22% of usage

Sewer

- Sewer – 2006 Expense \$1,158,668
- Capacity is 1.8 Million Gallons Day (MGD)
 - 2007 Average Usage was .715 MGD
- 27% of Village Budget (Including Water)
- 76% of usage was village
- 24% of usage came from SUNY

Overview of Current Issues

Issues Identified by CGR

- **Primary**
 - High taxes and rising costs and a tax base that is relatively flat
 - Lack of non property tax revenue
 - Lack of coordinated long range development plan.
- **Secondary**
 - Land Control
 - Water/Sewer Sharing

Key Community-Wide Assets in Local Government Activities

- Police
- Water
- Sewer
- Combined Highway Department Operations
- Economic center of the county

Review of Options

- CGR reviewed the functional areas in the context of the issues we identified as compared against the key community-wide assets.
 - Some assets were reviewed in the context of being a regional asset.
- All options that were considered either had efficiency gains and/or cost savings associated with them.

Options for Administration

1. **Efficiency & Cost Savings Options (2)**
 1. **Combine Village and Town Hall Facility**
 - Share Utilities (Cost Savings)
 - Town Budgets \$24,800 for Rent/Utilities/Supplies/Cleaning
 - Streamline Operations (Efficiency Gains)
 2. **Consolidate Municipalities**
 - Significant savings due to potential personnel savings along with rent, utilities, benefits, etc. (Cost Savings Over Time)
 - Net Savings Estimate = \$150,000

Options for Courts

1. Efficiency Gains & Cost Savings Options (1)
 1. Dissolve Village Court and Merge into Town Court
 - Elimination of 2 PT Justices over time
 - Court activity suggests one court could handle the volume
 - Streamline court function for community
 - Majority of vehicle and traffic fine revenue would revert to town
 - Net Savings Estimate: \$10,000

Options for Code Enforcement

1. Efficiency Gains & Cost Savings Options (1)
 1. Combine Town and Village Department Under Shared Service Agreement Essentially same personnel configuration, but becomes townwide function
 - Streamline operations (Efficiency)
 - May not be useful if administration does not merge
 - Improve community perception of coordination between two communities (Efficiency)
 - Net Savings Estimate: \$1000

Options for Planning

1. Efficiency Gains Only
 1. Combine Planning and Zoning Boards
 - 1 combined board for planning
 - 1 combined board for zoning
 - Follow Lake Placid/North Elba Model
 - Equal representation (3 people appointed from each municipality) with 1 at large member agreed upon by village and town board
 - Net Savings Estimate: Future savings through better coordination and economic and community development.

Options for Police

1. Townwide Police

- Village Police would provide townwide coverage
- Cost Impact:
 - May increase the size of the force
 - Immediate Increase in Total Cost due to:
 - Maintenance
 - Fuel
 - Overtime
- Efficiency:
 - More equitable distribution of cost for a community-wide asset

Options for Police (2)

2. Find new sources of revenue to underwrite budget
 - Create a Business Improvement District
 - May be some limits on tax revenue that could be received as a result of this BID.
 - Negotiate with County to allocate some sales tax revenue to underwrite cost of Cobleskill Police Department

Options for Parks and Recreation

- Create a regional parks and recreation board with representation from all towns, villages, and the county for planning and budget purposes.
 - Model for this arrangement exists in Tompkins County
 - May facilitate better cost sharing with surrounding communities
 - Net Savings Estimate: Cannot calculate without formalizing an agreement

Options for Water & Sewer

- Create a Regional Water & Sewer Shared Services Committee to review entire town and study benefits of extending service beyond the village
 - Follow Highway Committee Model
 - 2 from each elected board
 - Authority rests with village
 - Generate an agreement that would give the committee authority to act in best interest of whole community
 - Committee would serve as a reviewer and approver of all new projects related to water service.

Options for Water & Sewer (2)

- Generate a revenue sharing agreement based upon increase in full assessed valuation from extending water/sewer into town.
- Develop revised water/sewer rates to more fairly link costs with users.

Refuse

- User Fee Model (Efficiency Improvement)
 - Remove charge from general fund
 - Change law to allow commercial businesses to be picked up
 - User Fee Model allows for expansion outside of village if town residents wanted to partake
- Pay as you Throw (PAYT)
 - Users are charged based upon quantity of refuse

Summary:

Efficiency Gains and Cost Impact

- Efficiency Gains
 - Combine Planning Boards
 - Revise Refuse Collection Law
 - Parks and Recreation - Unknown
- Efficiency Gains & Cost Impact
 - Combine Administrative Offices – Save \$150,000
 - Merge Courts – Save \$10,000
 - Merge Code Enforcement Units- Save \$1,000
- Police
 - Create a Townwide Police Force – Increase Cost but spread cost around the entire community
 - Business Improvement District – Increase Revenue

How do Options address Key Issues?

- Issue 1: High Costs with relatively flat tax base
 - Options
 - Merge Administrative Offices
 - Merge Courts
 - Merge Code Enforcement Units
 - Revise Refuse Collection Law
 - Develop a Regional Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Find Revenue to Underwrite Police Department
 - Dissolve village into town
 - Dissolve town & village and create a city
 - Increase revenue sharing agreement with County

How do Options address Key Issues?

- Issue 2: Lack of Non-Property Tax Revenue
 - Options
 - Create a city
 - Pre-empt sales tax
 - Negotiate a new revenue sharing agreement with County without creating a city
 - Negotiate with County to help pay for Police Dept.

- Issue 3: Lack of coordinated long range plan
 - Options
 - Merge Planning and ZBA Boards
 - Create a Water/Sewer Review Board

How do Options address Key Issues?

- Issue 4: Land Control
 - Negotiate Revenue Sharing Agreement for property tax received from new development if water and sewer are extended to facilitate the development in the town outside of the village
- Issue 5: Water/Sewer Sharing
 - Generate a Water/Sewer Review Board
 - Same options as Issue 4, Land Control

Some Facts About Consolidation

General Consolidation Benefits

- Would likely mean Dissolving the Village
- Streamline administration and operations of both municipalities
- Facilitate joint comprehensive and long range planning to stimulate economic and community development opportunities
- Remove boundaries for water and sewer service expansion

Consolidation State Aid Benefits

- Aid and Incentive to Municipalities (AIM)
 - 2008-09 NYS Budget provides significant incentive for municipalities that consolidate
 - Option 1: Increase in AIM to Town & Village of Cobleskill of \$18,384 in the first year
 - Option 2: Increase in AIM to Town & Village of Cobleskill of \$347,960 in the first year.
 - Option 3: Increase in AIM to Town & Village of Cobleskill of \$176,463 in the first year.

Consolidation Financial Impact Summary

- Expense Reduction: \$160,000
- Revenue Impact
 - Loss of Village Gross Utilities Receipts Tax - \$65,000 in 2006
 - Increase AIM by as much as \$348,000
- Net Range of Impact:
 - Savings Range: \$160,000 – \$443,000
- Other costs/savings would have to be developed in the context of a dissolution plan

City Status

- Town and Village both Dissolve
 - Form new city with dual zone taxation
 - Last attempt to form a city was by the Village of Newark and Town of Arcadia in 1987,
 - Town never signed off on final paperwork and charter was vetoed by NYS legislature
- Pre-empt Sales Tax
 - Between 60-70% of taxable sales in Schoharie County occurring in the Village of Cobleskill
 - Might yield \$2 Million more in non-property tax revenue to the community

City Status Implications

- Court function becomes state responsibility except for facility maintenance
- School District issues would require further research
- Redefine how region develops from economic and land use perspective

City Status Implications (2)

- County would lose sales tax creating shift of costs from local to county level
 - County tax rate might increase by \$1.29/\$1000
 - Village/Town tax rates have potential to go away depending on what sales tax rate is chosen during pre-emption.
- Surrounding Towns and Villages who share sales tax would receive a reduced amount (between 17.5% and 35%)

Tax Impact Analysis

- \$10,000 Levy change in Village: $\$.07/\$1000 = \$10.01$ annually for a house assessed at \$150,000.
- \$10,000 Levy change in TOV: $\$.11/\$1000 = \$15.79$ annually for a house assessed at \$150,000.
- Tax levy is lowered by reducing costs, or increasing non-property tax revenue.

	Tax Levy Change	Tax Rate Change per \$1,000 of Taxable Assessed Valuation
TOV	\$10,000	\$0.11
Townwide	\$10,000	\$0.04
Village	\$10,000	\$0.07

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Joint town and village board meetings to discuss findings of the report
 - Recommend action steps based upon options that have been presented
- Develop a negotiating strategy with the county in regards to sales tax and municipal services
- Consider fiscal or economic impact study to research development issues within the town
- Take steps to study city status transition issues in greater detail

Community Feedback

SHARED SERVICES/CONSOLIDATION STUDY

Village & Town of Cobleskill

December 11, 2007

COMMENT SHEET

Please let CGR and the Study Committee know what suggestions and ideas you have for service sharing/consolidation for the Village & Town of Cobleskill. All feedback will be collected by CGR and kept confidential and any information that is obtained and used in our report will be summarized without reference to individuals. We have provided a space for your name, address and telephone number in order to follow-up with you should your comments spark any questions from us. Providing your name is optional, but may be helpful. Return your comments by January 11, 2008 in one of the following ways:

- 1) Complete and give to CGR after tonight's meeting
- 2) Complete, scan and email this form to: ssittig@cgr.org
- 3) Complete and mail to Scott Sittig, CGR, 1 So. Washington St., Suite 400, Rochester, NY 14614 – 1135
- 4) Call Scott Sittig at CGR: (585) 327-7082
- 5) Go to live.cgr.org/Cobleskill and submit feedback via the CGR website

Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement

Courts

Over

Police

Highway

Parks

Water/Sewer

Administration & Governance

Other

Name (Optional)

Address

Phone Number

Email

SHARED SERVICES/CONSOLIDATION STUDY FACTSHEET**Village & Town of Cobleskill***December 11, 2007***1. What is the Purpose of the Study?**

The Village, on behalf of the village and the town, has received a state grant to conduct a study to address the potential for sharing or consolidating services now provided by the two municipalities. The grant is a NYS Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI) grant.

2. Which Services Are Being Studied?

The study will examine:

- General Government Administration (Clerks, Boards, etc.)
- Courts
- Highway Department
- Police & Fire protection
- Parks and Other Recreational Facilities & Services
- Land Use Laws, Planning, Zoning, Assessment and Code Enforcement
- Water & Sewer Service
- Shared Services Strategies for the two Municipalities

3. Who is Conducting the Study?

The Center for Governmental Research (CGR), which is based in Rochester, NY, has been engaged for this study. CGR has been conducting management studies for governments since 1915, and works with municipalities of all sizes across the state.

4. Is there a Steering Committee Representing the Village and Towns?

A 5-member committee is providing oversight for the study. Members are:

Village of Cobleskill: Mayor Mike Sellers, John O'Donnell

Town of Cobleskill: Supervisor Mike Montario, Ken Hotopp, Ruth Bradt (Supervisor-Elect Roger Cohn has been a part of the most recent meetings as well)

5. What are the Key Steps in a Consolidation Study?

For this study, CGR and the committee have identified five major phases:

- Project Startup & First Public Presentation on August 14, 2007
- Primary Data Collection – a “hands-on” review & analysis of current operations
- Identification & Evaluation of Cooperation / Consolidation Alternatives & Public Forums on the Options
- Recommendation for a Draft Action Plan & Draft Implementation Plan
- Public Presentation to Solicit Opinions on the Draft Plans & the Final Study Report

6. **What is the Timeframe for the Study?**

CGR will complete the study in the spring of 2008.

7. **Who Should I Contact at CGR if I Want to Provide Input for the Study?**

CGR wants residents and taxpayers to tell us which services and functions they need and expect, and give us their ideas about the best ways to provide them. We would appreciate receiving your input by January 7, 2008. A separate comment sheet is provided for your convenience. Contact Scott Sittig: ssittig@cgr.org (585) 327-7082 or go to live.cgr.org/Cobleskill and fill in the form online.

8. **What is the ratio of the population of the Village to the Town?** Roughly 2.4/1

	2006	2000	1990
Village	4,632	4,533	5,268
TOV	1,916	1,874	2,002
Town	6,548	6,407	7,270

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 Population Estimates, Census 2000, 1990 Census

9. **The Revenues and Expenses for Each Municipality in the Most Recent Fiscal Year:**

Municipality	Fiscal Year Ended	Expenditures	Revenues	Taxable Assessed Valuation *
Village	5/31/2006	\$4,333,980	\$4,285,216	\$149,835,139
Town	12/31/2006	\$908,402	\$1,045,825	\$94,971,860
TOTAL		\$5,242,382	\$5,331,041	\$244,806,999

* Taxable Assessed Valuation Data was as of 9/04/07

10. **A Comparison of Functional Expenses Between the Village and Town:**

Functional Area	Expense		Combined Total
	Village	Town	
Administration	\$603,833	\$297,987	\$901,820
Court	\$97,606	\$43,510	\$141,116
Highway Department	\$645,026	\$365,822	\$1,010,848
Police	\$764,198		\$764,198
Fire	\$75,866	\$73,983	\$149,849
Parks & Recreation	\$20,000	\$42,697	\$62,697
Planning & Zoning	\$108,777	\$41,949	\$150,726
Debt & Interest	\$254,097	\$42,454	\$296,551
Water	\$605,909		\$605,909
Sewer	\$1,158,668		\$1,158,668
Total	\$4,333,980	\$908,402	\$5,242,382
Ratio of Total	4.8	1	