

**Batavia City / Town Consolidation Study Second Public Forum**  
**June 30, 2009**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Batavia High School Auditorium**

**Questions / Comments / Suggestions received:**

1. Town resident said up until now they have not heard anything from the Town Board about this and he asked Town Board Representative John Gerace to stand up and explain to the Town why the Board wanted to look into this.
2. Town resident said that in the presentation the speaker noted that DPW would be in Tier 1 and that DPW maintains parks and leaf pick up. He said that the parks are mostly in the City and asked if the Town residents in Tier 1 would have to pay the labor costs for DPW to maintain the parks. He also said that the City has obsolete trucks and he asked if the Town residents in Tier 1 would have to pay to replace them.
3. City resident read from an article in the Buffalo News by William Hudnut III titled "Collaboration, not Competition, is critical". She said she is a proponent of consolidation and today's world problems expand across boundaries.
4. A lady asked about services in Tier 1. She said for example the Town's roads are plowed at 5:30 am now and asked if they would still be done by Town plows or City plows.
5. Town resident said that the committee mentioned services would be enhanced and she doesn't see how. She asked in the future how debts would be handled and if the entire new entity would become responsible for all debts and the former Town residents would be acquiring the current City debt. She said there are a lot of assumptions and she hasn't heard the risks. She asked if the school taxes would be affected. She asked what the transition costs would be. She said the timetable does not seem possible. She asked what the contingency plan is if they do not make the timetable. She wants to know if the public will have the opportunity to see the plan before it goes for a vote.
6. Town resident said he views consolidation as a desperate proposal by the City to solve fiscal problems. He thinks a lot of money is being spent on this study that the Town residents did not ask for.
7. Town resident asked what the current Town assets are. She wants to know in the new entity how the current Town residents will get to spend the current Town assets. She wants to know who is going to manage the money. She said she is confused over the proposed new board and how it will be made up. She thinks the City representatives will have a say in how the current Town's assets will be spent. She said she likes the way it is now.

8. Town resident asked where the idea of a consolidation study came from, he said he didn't see people petitioning for it. He said he heard the idea came from the State.
9. Town resident said he doesn't think changes can be made in terms of cost savings. He said the study did cost them money because all grants are paid from tax dollars. He said he has 27 years experience in municipal finance and pension and health care costs are trying to align with private businesses. He said municipalities don't generate profit, they steal.
10. City resident asked a question regarding the slide in the power point presentation that showed the \$90,000 average house. He asked about the County tax the City also pays for the Sheriff's and the Police Department. He asked if the City would receive a reduction from their County tax portion. He said it's duplication in the City. He asked about voting and asked if the majority could decide and he asked who was eligible to vote. He asked if the new entity would have the opportunity to restart the union agreements with a new wage base and new benefits. He said the committee has to find that out. He said the public needs that information for the next meeting. He said a new entity would change the atmosphere of the County and asked why the County couldn't start the conversation for the whole County. He said going forward a lot of City folks want the committee to look at City Police & Fire. He said we have trained Police and Fire and asked why they can't use it and work it into the consolidation. He said the Police force should be made for the whole Town and we shouldn't have to pay for the Sheriff's department anymore. He asked why not take this all the way to how we want it to look in twenty years.
11. Steve Hyde / President of GCEDC (Genesee County Economic Development Center) spoke. He said the business community is constantly asking for something like this to be looked at. He is excited about the possibility to streamline government and costs. He painted two scenarios. He said that if the core of the central population is in decline its affects tend to spread outward in the community. He said this is just building the framework and he asked people to keep an open mind.
12. Town resident asked how many people in the Town are for a consolidation plan.
13. Gentleman stated that he is concerned about equal representation. He doesn't want to see an area be out voted. He wants to feel he is equally represented. He asked in 2018 when they can maintain more Town tax dollars how will that money be allocated. He said the City has bombed out with ideas and asked who can say the mall and roundabout were good ideas. He asked if the committee has looked out of New York State to see how other areas have benefited from consolidation.
14. A gentleman said that what is really needed is more business in the City. He said the City has not made it easy for businesses. He gave Mothers as an example and implied that Mothers is not open due to the City. He said changes need to be made.
15. Town resident and previous Town board member spoke. She said the City has been considered the donut hole of the County. She said she has to drive 42

- miles to work everyday. She said the reason the Town doesn't have a Town tax is because they have been frugal. She asked how a new entity would be more efficient. She said she thinks it sounds as if it would be heavy on top. She asked if the school taxes would be affected by a change in boundaries.
16. City resident asked how much property in the City is tax exempt for places such as the hospital, schools, churches, etc. She said we can bring a lot of infrastructure to the Town but there are a lot of services in the City that Town residents still use and need.
  17. City resident said he didn't see anything in the plan that would encourage businesses to move downtown. He asked if in 2018 the City could get a greater sales tax if they could use that to pay off what the City still owes for City Hall and Dwyer Stadium.
  18. Gentleman spoke and he said he is a lifelong resident of the community. He lives in the Town and works in the City. He said he agrees with Steve Hyde and we need jobs. He said he is a CPA and he is always trying to find ways around tax burden for his clients. He thinks there is mis-information out there. He asked people to do what is best for the community and to get the facts and information.
  19. City resident said he has been a volunteer on a former City committee that had a goal to reduce the cost of services. He said the City is ready for this now. He wants to find ways to reduce everyone's expenses. He asked the committee to structure a proposal to improve the value of government. He thinks Batavia has great opportunities. He said the intent should be to look at the structure and a value related agreement. He said its not like you are giving up anything, it's like you are gaining. He said he is happy to get involved. He said if there are no businesses then the retail stores won't make it either because no one will be able to shop there.
  20. City resident asked if there is an actual percentage of savings.
  21. Town resident said it's the old saying, "if it's not broke / don't fix it". He said he thinks the City needs a new Council and the Town needs a new Board.
  22. Town resident said she is a recent graduate and is concerned for her future. She said that she thinks the three tier system is hard to understand. She asked how come other communities are not successful with consolidation. She said she would be disappointed if we became an extension of Buffalo or Rochester. She doesn't want to lose the small town feel.
  23. Gentleman said he heard talk of bringing business back to Batavia. He said to look at society and manufacturing is no longer around. He said we are a service and information based society now. He said we have to look at fiber optics and not just landlines. He asked the committee to look at higher technology.
  24. Town resident said she is not against consolidation of services. She said with highways they may be better off going County wide with the service. She is concerned with the make up of the representatives for the new government body. She said with the population in the City there would have to be City representatives and she is afraid they would vote to change hunting or the proximity of farm animals to other houses. She is worried the Town would

change and wouldn't have a voice in the matter. She said the new government would mean a Tier 1 tax for her and she wouldn't see any benefits for it. She said she is on a State highway. She asked who created the committee. She asked what made them a cross section. She said there is one paid Town of Batavia employee that lives in the City and two paid City managers. She asked if anyone on the committee has a farm. She asked if the committee is compensated for mileage or anything.

25. Town resident asked where the County is in all of this. He said he would think they would want input in all of this.
26. Town resident said when the City decided to get rid of dispatch the County had to take on the labor expense and now the City is looking for the Town to take on the City DPW expense. He said they should check the Taylor's Law to see about one union. He said they would have to disband both unions for it to work. He asked why there wasn't a step for public hearings.