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## Sides discuss Brockport dissolution

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Staff writer

BROCKPORT — Both sides of the village dissolution issue debated the topic during a meeting Wednesday night at Oliver Middle School.

The meeting, which attracted about 200 residents, was moderated by the League of Women Voters and the Center for Governmental Research.

Rhett King represented the Brockport Tax Cutters group, which wants to dissolve the village and merge with the town of Sweden. Jo Matela, a former mayor of the village, represented the Pro-Brockport group, which wants to keep the village intact.

King spoke of declining services offered by the village, increasing taxes and huge drops in village coffers.

"We can't keep this dysfunctional government that we have had for 10 years," King said. "Why dissolution? Unfortunately, there aren't really any better options."

Matela said that village needs are different from town needs, and that each village is different.

She also said that residents don't know what they really will be voting for.

"There is no data. There is no plan," Matela said. "I can't say it enough. Without a plan, you can't really vote."

But that's what residents will do, on June 15.

Charles Zettek Jr., vice president of the Center for Governmental Research, said at Wednesday's meeting that the lack of a plan is a failure of a new state law that went into effect in March. That law allows citizens to petition to dissolve certain government entities, as was done in Brockport.

"But you still have to vote," Zettek said.

He also said there are many unknowns in the dissolution process, such as what services the town of Sweden would provide to Brockport residents if the village dissolved.

He said the village and town governments would have to form joint committees to oversee issues such as the transfer of employees and paying off debt. Zettek pointed out that Brockport has a \$2.5 million bond that will be due within a couple of years.

He also said Village Board members would be responsible for an overall dissolution plan but noted "there are no guarantees" that Sweden would be bound by the plan.

The bottom line, Zettek said, would be voters deciding whether the town would act in the best interests of Brockport residents if the village is dissolved.

The forum also included discussion about the Brockport Police Department and its future and other cases of municipal dissolution in New York, of which Zettek said there were a handful.

At the end of the two-hour meeting, Dr. Jim Goetz of Park Avenue said he still had a lot of questions.

"We have to vote without knowing what we're voting for," he said. "But we all have the same problem — taxes are too high. The only fact is, there are no facts. It's all conjecture."

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## Additional Facts

If you go

- A representative from the New York Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials will hold a forum on the dissolution topic at 6 p.m. June 2 at Oliver Middle School, 40 Allen St.
  - The Center for Governmental Research and the League of Women Voters will hold another forum at 7 p.m. June 8, also at Oliver Middle School.
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