

Altmar residents vote Tuesday on whether dissolution plan should take effect

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Debra J. Groom / The Post-Standard
By

Altmar, NY -- The 252 or so registered voters in Altmar head to the polls Tuesday to decide whether they want the village's dissolution plan to take effect.

The dissolution plan, researched and written by the Center for Governmental Research in Rochester with help from a local dissolution committee, contains information on what will happen to village assets, what village and town taxes will look like, what services will be provided and what town staffing will look like if the village government is abolished.

Voters will vote only on whether the plan should go into effect. Residents already approved abolishing the village in a vote Nov. 20, 2010.

If village voters accept the dissolution plan during the Dec. 6 vote, Altmar will be abolished June 1, 2013. If voters reject the plan, Altmar remains a village. But residents could submit another petition at any time to begin the dissolution process again.

If abolished, Altmar would be the first municipality in the Central New York four-county area to dissolve since a new state law took effect to make the process easier. Camillus residents voted Nov. 8 not to dissolve.

Voters will see wording similar to the following at the polls: "The voters of the village of Altmar, having previously voted to dissolve, shall the dissolution plan take effect? YES or NO

Here are some highlights of the dissolution plan:

Village taxes: Village residents will see substantial tax savings if Altmar is dissolved. The plan states village residents with houses assessed at \$50,000 would see village/town taxes go from \$486 a year to \$304 a year. If the town of Albion receives state money for municipalities that consolidate, Altmar residents would see yearly town taxes of \$269.

Town of Albion taxes: Albion residents living outside Altmar wouldn't see much change in taxes. The plan states town residents with a house assessed at \$50,000 would see taxes go from \$250 a year to \$261 without state consolidation aid, but from \$250 to \$226 with the state money.

Fire department: The village's largest asset. The dissolution plan calls for the department to become an

independent fire department.

Chris Valens of the state Department of State, said this means the fire department would be owned by the town of Albion. The fire department cannot own the assets of the fire department. The town would lease fire department assets back to the department, usually for about \$1 a year.

The town would contract with the independent fire corporation to provide protection to the service area. The town would collect taxes from residents for fire protection and pay the fire department the amount listed in the contract.

Valen also said while the department would be independent when dissolution occurs, the town board could change that. He said the town board can decide to keep the independent department or switch to a fire district, which would be its own body governed by an elected board of fire commissioners.

Village liabilities: The plan states the village has no lawsuits against it and has no long-term debt.

Village assets: The insured value of village equipment is \$64,400 and village fire equipment is \$898,600. Street light poles, conduits and fixtures owned by National Grid. Village assets will be turned over to Albion when the village dissolves.

Debt: The principal on village debt as of May 31 is \$151,206 for two fire trucks.

Services maintained: Services provided by the village that will be provided by the town if the village dissolves include local government representation, clerical and administrative services (no additional pay for town employees), code enforcement, road, storm sewer, building maintenance, street sweeping and related services, mowing of municipal building grounds and cemetery and fire and emergency medical services.

Services discontinued: Brush and leaf pick up, sidewalk maintenance. Sidewalks will be maintained by village residents. A town law is supposed to be developed concerning sidewalk replacement.

The dissolution process began last year when resident Bryan Myers submitted a petition to the village board asking for a vote of residents on whether the village should be abolished. Residents voted 80 to 74 to abolish the village.

But then on Sept. 17, a petition signed by 102 people was submitted to the village forcing a vote on the dissolution plan. The plan was approved by the village board Aug. 3.

Here are the members of the Altmar dissolution committee: Mayor Corey W. Holcomb; Village Clerk Margaret Bailey; fire chief Carl W. Holcomb; Village Trustee Tom Reff; Town Supervisor Carl E Anson Jr.; Town Board Member Ronald Eldred; resident Philip G. Bortz. Staff from the Center for Government Research were project director Charlie Zettek and project manager Vicki Brown.

For more information

To read the **entire dissolution plan or a summary** of the plan, go to this link.

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