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CGR Chosen to Study Ossining Village/Town Merger

by Tien-Shun Lee 07/13/11



2



Joseph Stefko of CGR gave a presentation in June on how his company would study alternate government structures for Ossining.

Photo Credit: Tien-Shun Lee

OSSINING, N.Y. – The Center for Government Research consulting company has been chosen by the village and town's Board of Trustees to study alternate government structures for the municipalities, including a potential merger of the village and town.

"We are certainly looking forward to getting started in the community," said Joseph Stefko, a director of public finance at CGR who will be spearheading the studies.

Stefko said initial steps would be for CGR consultants to meet with the Ossining study steering committee to talk about not only substantive aspects of the study, but also what the public communication and engagement strategy is going to be.

"We really take the transparency and public engagement strategy seriously. It's important to take the public along from the beginning," Stefko said.

Ossining village mayor William Hanauer said the steering committee would consist of either the Board of Trustees for both the village and town, or some reduced version of the two boards.

"We'll be negotiating the contract with (CGR), and then there will be a meeting with whatever is going to be called the committee," Hanauer said.

The town of Ossining's Board of Trustees was expected to pass a resolution to sign a contract with CGR on Tuesday evening.

Stefko said one of the first things CGR expects to do is set up a study website that will be a central repository for all information and supporting documents. Village and town websites could then link to that site.



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CGR was one of two consulting companies that was chosen by Ossining village and town boards to give a presentation in June, after submitting a response to a Request For Proposals. A consultant from Fairweather Consulting also gave a presentation but the company was ultimately not chosen.

Ossining municipalities received a \$45,000 grant about a year ago to study various forms of government that could work for the village and town, including a town/village merger, dissolving the village, having the village annex the town, and other possibilities.

CGR plans to take eight months to do the study, and to charge a fixed price of \$53,100.

"We don't bring any preconceived idea as to what the end result is going to be, or what's in the best interest of the community. We see our job as being to facilitate a range of options," Stefko said. "We really see our role as being an analyst, but ultimately it's the steering committee and community's decision to make."

Do you think Ossining would benefit from an alternate government structure? Leave a comment below or join TheDailyOssining.com on Facebook.

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2



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