

EDITORIAL: Vote yes on dissolution

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The arguments against dissolution of the village of Corinth themselves dissolve with a bit of clear thinking.

We suspect the local committee members who came out against dissolution spent too long staring at the numbers and lost their perspective. Here's the bottom line, according to the careful, detailed report put together by the Center for Governmental Research: Dissolving the village saves village taxpayers money.

Should we repeat that?

If you live in the village - and only residents of the village will be voting on this issue - dissolution will make your tax bill go down.

No one can pinpoint to the dollar how much money village taxpayers will save through dissolution, but the report pegs it at between \$108 and \$460 a year for a property assessed at \$100,000.

How much your tax bill will go down depends upon several variables, including whether the state delivers all the incentive funding it has promised and how many village services, such as garbage pickup and sidewalk snow removal, are preserved. But you will pay less.

Even if the savings come out on the low end, who turns down \$100? That's a new pair of nice shoes, every year.

The volunteers on the dissolution committee deserve praise for putting in lots of hours studying and discussing the issue. From reading their reports on the village website, we believe they tried to approach the question with an open mind, and they want the best for Corinth.

But their objections are vague and, occasionally, flat wrong. They assume the worst-case scenario will apply to every unknown aspect of dissolution, or they argue dissolution could be a good thing but "isn't worth the risk."

What risk? Even under a worst-case scenario, village taxpayers save money.

The one criticism we have of the work done by the committee is that most of them not only recommended against dissolution but also against holding a public referendum. This reminds us of the situation in the Abraham Wing school district in Glens Falls, where the school board has blocked efforts to study a consolidation with the Glens Falls district. These efforts to improve services and save money deserve to be studied and voted on by the people they affect. If they're defeated, fine. That's democracy.

In Corinth, citizens forced the issue by petitioning for a referendum. But it's important, as people go to the polls, that they understand what their vote means.

A mailer sent out by the Village Board purports to answer questions about the issue but casts dissolution in such a negative light it amounts to fear-mongering. It's important to remember, if you read the mailer, that it was published by the village board and village mayor, the people who would lose their positions as political leaders (not to mention their salaries) under dissolution.

The mailer questions whether payments made in lieu of taxes by Curtis-Palmer Hydroelectric Company would continue if the village dissolves. Curtis-Palmer, and everyone else, will have to continue making property tax payments if the village dissolves. To suggest that the company might escape its obligation to pay property taxes under dissolution is irresponsible and untrue.

Curtis-Palmer now has a payment in lieu of taxes agreement in place, which expires in the 2013-14 budget year. Since such agreements are made to reduce a property owner's taxes, the amount of property taxes the company pays will soon be going up, not down.

In figuring how much village taxes would fall, the mailer assumes the state would not be making incentive payments to Corinth. But the incentive program is in place and Corinth is in line to receive more than \$400,000 a year. It's wise to consider the state's shaky finances and plan for the possible elimination of the incentives, but it's misleading to present figures as fact, as the mailer does, when you're making worst-case assumptions.

With incentives or without them, however, village taxpayers will save money under dissolution.

The mailer also says the village will lose its political voice under dissolution because the Town Board will be making the decisions. But the old village would be part of the new town, and residents from the village area would be eligible for election to the Town Board. No one will lose their political voice.

Bigger doesn't always mean better, but a combined town and village of Corinth would have a population of about 6,500, not very big. This is naturally a single entity, which will do better advocating for Corinth and its residents with one voice. All the challenges of dissolution can be met in a straightforward fashion, as spelled out in the report from the Center for Governmental Research, which can be found on the village's website ([villageof](http://villageofcorinthny.com)

corinthny.com). Look it over before you vote and, then, if you like the idea of having your property taxes go down, vote for dissolution.

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