

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### Development of a Dissolution Study with Alternatives to Dissolution for the Village of Hoosick Falls, NY

Issued by:

Village of Hoosick Falls, New York  
December 13, 2011

The Village of Hoosick Falls, New York is seeking proposals from qualified individuals, consulting firms or teams to provide technical assistance in the preparation of a *Dissolution Study with Alternatives to Dissolution* pursuant to former Village Law Article 19 - Dissolution of Villages and Article 17-A of the General Municipal Law. The Village applied for and received a Local Government Efficiency Grant in the amount of \$50,000 to fund this project. The approved Program Work Plan with New York State Department of State is attached (Attachment A).

#### **Background:**

The Village of Hoosick Falls, incorporated in 1827, is located in the Town of Hoosick, in northeastern Rensselaer County. As with so many small communities statewide, the Village appears to be in a downward economic spiral with decreasing population numbers, loss of employment opportunities, and a stagnating real estate market. Diminishing tax base threatens the Village's ability to continue to efficiently provide quality services without further increasing the tax burden on Village residents. While prudent economics requires Village leaders to examine potential dissolution or cost saving changes in service delivery, they must also commit to maintaining an excellent quality of life for Village residents. A *Village of Hoosick Falls Dissolution Study with Alternatives to Dissolution* will investigate all available means to improve the cost effectiveness of conducting governmental business and will contain practical recommendations that can be implemented and sustained.

#### **Issues to be addressed by the Study:**

The Village of Hoosick Falls has determined that it is necessary to conduct a detailed review of all municipal services provided by the Village, and determine the fiscal impact of Village dissolution or other municipal service delivery alternatives on the citizens of the Village and Town-Outside the Village. The objective is to collect and objectively analyze data regarding the feasibility and desirability of the dissolution of the Village of Hoosick Falls to provide its taxpayers and elected officials with accurate and reliable information regarding the costs and benefits resulting from village dissolution. The overall goal of the *Study* is to document the fiscal implications of Village dissolution and identify other alternative actions that, through either municipal sharing or department consolidation, could achieve meaningful cost savings and/or improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery.

#### **Project Work Plan:**

See Attachment A

#### **Project Timeline:**

It is anticipated that the project will be completed within a 10-month time frame.

#### **Cost Proposal:**

The consultant shall submit a detailed cost proposal following the outline of the Project Work Plan (see Attachment A).

**Selection Criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated based on their quality, clarity, and demonstrated understanding of the Village of Hoosick and the project objectives. The Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Relevant experience in the realm of shared municipal services, consolidation and dissolution studies (25%)
2. General experience related to advising municipalities on municipal finance issues. (25%)
3. Familiarity with the Capital Region, Rensselaer County and knowledge of the Town and Village of Hoosick. (10%)
4. Qualifications of personnel to be assigned to this project. (15%)
5. Experience and success with public meeting facilitation and public participation strategies. (10%)
6. Experience with providing high-quality deliverables in a timely manner. (10%)
7. Price (5%)

**References:**

The consultant must submit <sup>two ✓</sup> (2) references from projects of similar scope and nature.

**Proposal Submission:**

Interested consultants should submit <sup>three ✓</sup> (3) paper copies and one (1) digital copy (PDF or DOC) of their proposal by 3:00 P.M. on January 10, 2012. Proposals submitted after the scheduled time and date will not be accepted. Faxed or e-mailed submissions will not be accepted. The Village of Hoosick Falls reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions associated with this work.

Proposal shall be submitted to:

Village of Hoosick Falls  
Denise McMahon, Treasurer and Chief Fiscal Officer  
24 Main St  
Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

**Additional Information:**

Questions about the project should be directed to Ann Bornt, Village Clerk at 518-686-7072 or [villageclerk@hoosick.org](mailto:villageclerk@hoosick.org)

**ATTACHMENT A:  
Program Work Plan**

**TASK 1 COORDINATION MEETINGS**

**Activity 1.1 Kick-off Meeting:** The consultant, along with the Committee, will initiate the project with a kick off meeting. The consultant will work with the Village Board and appointed Committee at the kick-off meeting to outline the final scope of services to ensure that the activities and tasks to be performed are directly responsive to the needs of the Village. Goals, expectations, project responsibilities and project timeline will be clearly defined.

**Activity 1.2 Committee Coordination Meetings:** The consultant will facilitate coordination of five (5) meetings between the Committee and the consultant. The meetings will serve as work sessions and will provide the Committee with an opportunity to review draft documents, discuss questions and concerns, and provide input. Prior to each meeting, the consultant will prepare agendas and deliver meeting materials to the Committee.

**TASK 2 STUDY ELEMENTS AND ANALYSIS**

**Task 2.1 Elements:** Working with the Committee, the consultant will examine and analyze the project elements listed below. The findings will be reported in the *Village of Hoosick Falls Dissolution Study with Alternatives to Dissolution*, "Study".

1. The name of the local government Village to be dissolved; - the Village of Hoosick Falls
2. The territorial boundaries of the Village
3. The type and/or class of the Village
4. The Village's assets, including but not limited to real and personal property, and the fair value thereof in current money of the United States
5. The Village's liabilities and indebtedness, bonded and otherwise, and the fair value thereof in current money of the United States
6. Terms for the disposition of the Village's assets and the disposition of its liabilities and indebtedness, including the levy and collection of the necessary taxes and assessments
7. Any plan for the transfer or elimination of public employees
8. Any agreements entered into with the town or towns in which the Village is situated in order to carry out the dissolution
9. Whether any local laws, ordinances, rules or regulations of the Village shall remain in effect after the effective date of the dissolution or shall remain in effect for a period of time other than as provided by state law
10. The manner and means by which the residents of the Village will continue to be furnished municipal services following the Village's dissolution
11. A fiscal analysis of the effect of dissolution on the Village and the area of the Town of Hoosick and Rensselaer County

12. A fiscal estimate of the cost of dissolution
13. Any other matters desirable or necessary to carry out the dissolution
14. The effective date of the dissolution

As noted above, the study will include a comprehensive list of Village services, including information on a per-service basis which shall include budget allocation, employment allocation, per-resident cost, inventory of equipment, complexities of delivery of services, specialized knowledge of personnel, and necessary capital investments as well as the opportunity for cost savings and/or service enhancement. The consultant shall conduct a review of the services provided by the Town to identify which entity would most appropriately deliver the services currently provided by the Village.

The study shall also consider the public perception of a proposed municipal dissolution and/or the public's concerns and likely reactions to restructuring service delivery and resulting impact on service quality. In response, the consultant will present an assumption that explains conditions if the Village restructures service delivery, setting in motion the process to determine the potential cost and tax impacts. Major findings, including general fiscal impacts, will be presented to the Committee.

**Activity 2.2 Department Head Questionnaire & Interviews:** To effectively evaluate current services and consolidation/dissolution opportunities, the consultant will work with the Committee to finalize a list of key Village department heads and/or staff to be contacted and interviewed to gather information regarding duties and functions, employee status (full-time/part-time), salaries and wages, benefits, budgets, equipment and facility assets, and indebtedness. Key Village staff will be initially asked to complete a questionnaire, providing the consultant with a written description of the type of duties/responsibilities provided by each staff member, and all available information that identifies the level of services provided by each department, their organizational structure, and the annual operating figures. This data collection process will be followed up with one-on-one interviews with key department heads and/or staff for the purpose of clarifying information. During the one-on-one interviews, department heads/staff will be asked to discuss the key issues confronting each department as well as any perceived difficulties relating to sharing or consolidating particular services.

**Activity 2.3 Government Operations Review:** Utilizing the information provided by department heads and staff, the consultant will develop a comprehensive description of the functions and services administered by the Village, as well as the staffing and related costs to perform such services. This process will form the foundation for the consultant's assessment of existing services which is necessary to evaluate potential restructuring options and crucial to address the issue of job continuity for Village employees early on in the process, and to develop an organizational plan for transferring or eliminating Village employees.

**Activity 2.4 Fiscal Impact Analysis:** Utilizing the information gathered in Activities 2.1 through 2.3, as well as the fiscal metrics from the Comptroller's Local Government Database, Village annual reports and budgets, the consultant will develop a Fiscal Analysis to identify the overall financial implications of dissolution, and how it will

impact the residents and property owners of the Village and Town-outside the Village boundaries.

The analysis will identify areas of increased efficiencies through economies of scale, potential increased State Aid through New York State Consolidation Incentive Aid, potential savings through restructured Village services, i.e., private contracting or discontinuing certain services, and the financial impacts of Village residents no longer subsidizing Town government operations that do not necessarily provide services to Village tax payers. This analysis will result in a fiscal estimate of the cost of dissolution, as well as other potential alternatives to achieving cost savings and/or efficiencies, such as:

- Dissolution
- Town and/or County Consolidation
- Shared Services
- Hamlet formation
- Special District formations

### **TASK 3 DRAFT PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

**Activity 3.1 Draft Dissolution/Consolidation Plan:** Using the information identified in the completed Government Operations Review Summary and Fiscal Analysis, and provisions relating to the items identified in Task 2 above, the Committee, working closely with the consultant, shall develop a best-case Dissolution Plan. The primary objective of this effort is to identify potential areas where the Village and Town can benefit from Village dissolution/consolidation and to provide the steps required for successful implementation. The consultant will include a model outlining the steps required to achieve dissolution. The model will identify potential implementation costs and the organizational changes required, including personnel, equipment, and facilities, as well as the legal requirements, processes and arrangements necessary to implement the dissolution. The consultant will also identify possible areas where reduction of duplicate layers of local government will lead to financial savings for municipalities and taxpayers, while maintaining quality municipal services.

It should be noted that the Committee may believe that dissolution is not in the Village's interest; however development of the Draft Dissolution Plan will provide two advantages. First, the Dissolution Plan will make certain assumptions that will allow for a refined fiscal impact model of the affected municipalities. Second, if served with a dissolution petition, the Village Board will have a Dissolution Plan which it can immediately provide to residents for consideration.

### **TASK 4 ALTERNATIVES TO DISSOLUTION**

**Activity 4.1 Alternatives:** The Committee, working closely with the consultant, will develop possible alternatives to dissolution that achieve cost savings and/or efficiencies in Village of Hoosick operations. The Study will outline other potential alternatives to achieve cost savings and/or efficiencies in Village operations. Potential alternatives to dissolution may include sharing services, functional consolidation, restructuring the delivery of certain services, and/or reduction or elimination of services. These alternatives are intended for the Village to consider should a decision be made to not dissolve the

Village government into the surrounding town(s). Each alternative scenario will be evaluated for fiscal impact.

#### **TASK 5 PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**Activity 5.1 Public Meetings:** Upon completion of the Draft and Final Dissolution Study, the public participation process will include two (2) public meetings to allow community residents and business owners to discuss the Final Draft Study. The consultant will prepare materials such as press releases, flyers, and information for the Village website. To build community awareness of the public meetings, the consultant will be responsible for facilitating the discussion at these meetings and will prepare a presentation and any appropriate handouts. A brief overview of the research process will be provided to inform the public of the process to date, present potential alternatives, and discuss the fiscal implications of dissolution/consolidation. The meetings will give the public the opportunity to identify any current problems they may perceive with current service provision, brainstorm potential solutions, and identify alternatives. Appropriate comments will be incorporated into the Final Draft Dissolution/Consolidation Plan.

#### **TASK 6 FINAL DISSOLUTION STUDY AND ALTERNATIVES TO DISSOLUTION**

**Activity 6.1 Final Study:** The results from Tasks 1 through 5 will be synthesized into the *Village of Hoosick Falls Dissolution Study and Alternatives to Dissolution*. The consultant will refine the Plan's concepts and recommendations to ensure the Plan is consistent with input from the public as well as the Committee and the Village Board. The Final Study will include all the narrative reports, figures, graphics, public participation results, and feedback obtained through the questionnaires and interviews, as well as implementation steps and recommendations for implementation. This effort will result in the *Village of Hoosick Falls Dissolution Study and Alternatives to Dissolution* which will then be delivered to the Committee.

#### **TASK 7 PUBLIC HEARING**

**Activity 7.1 Public Hearing:** The Committee will hold a public hearing on the *Village of Hoosick Falls Dissolution Study and Alternatives to Dissolution*. The Committee will transmit the final deliverable to the Village Board and prepare and transmit a summary of the public hearing.

#### **TASK 8 PROJECT CLOSE- OUT**

**Activity 8.1 Close-out:** The Village Board shall receive the final report from the Committee. It will then complete the required close-out process with the New York State Department of State.