

Village of Van Etten – Impact of Dissolution Summary Report

In August 2017, residents in the Village of Van Etten submitted to the Village Clerk a valid petition requesting a referendum on dissolution of the village pursuant to Article 17-A of the New York General Municipal Law.

The petition was determined to be valid by the clerk and the Village Board set the date of referendum to be **November 13, 2017**.

In an effort to inform the residents of the issues related to dissolution, including potential impacts to services received by the residents, projected fiscal impacts and other issues, the Village Board hired CGR to develop a report that identifies those impacts.

The findings of the report and video of the public meeting are available at a project specific website, www.cgr.org/van-etten

Service Impacts

The Village of Van Etten provides a variety of services to its residents and funds those services through several income sources, including property taxes assessed on the values of the property, and for the water service, user fees based on the service provided. The Town of Van Etten, Chemung County and the State of New York also provide services to the residents of Van Etten. The following paragraphs document some of the existing services provided by the Village to the residents and then projects what might happen to them if the village dissolves. A more detailed reporting that covers all the services is found in the following report.

Board of Trustees/Mayor – Both of these categories of position would be eliminated upon dissolution and the residents would rely on the town for these services.

Cemetery – It is likely that ownership of the cemeteries would transfer to the town and they would become responsible for the management and perpetual care.

Clerk – This position would be eliminated and any remaining functions would be picked up by the town. The town would likely need to add staff to

support the water district and cemetery operations.

Code Enforcement – The town would become responsible for code enforcement and would likely need to add staff hours to accomplish this task.

Fire Service - The biggest change in service would be for the fire department. There was not an in-depth objective analysis related to the quality of the services. CFR would likely be responding from a mile and a half outside the village, but this is may be partially mitigated by the differences in staffing, and the fact that CFR almost always has a first response vehicle staffed and available. This is in contrast to the village fire department which needs to have a person respond to the station. Also, CFR members have additional EMS equipment for allergic reactions and overdoses. CFR also has more trained members for both EMS and firefighting than the village. *The issue related to fire services deserves an in-depth and objective comparison between the departments by a neutral party before a suggestion as to the true impact to service can be made. This impact report did not have the scope to complete this analysis.*

Local Laws – All village laws would remain in effect for two years after dissolution or until they are adopted or discarded by the town.

Refuse Removal - The village contracts with a private hauler to collect and transport refuse and recyclables from the residences in the village. The contract is paid for out of the village general fund. The village sells stickers that must be placed on bags for them to be collected. The tags are sold at several local vendors (including village hall) for \$3 per tag. The revenue generated from the tag sales was \$8,200 in 2016 and \$8,400 in 2017. After dissolution, the Town is unlikely to continue the service for refuse collection. Residents of the village would need to seek their own arrangements, similar to how residents of the town currently have their service. A village resident might pay a dollar a week more for refuse costs if they place 2 bags per week out on the current system. As an alternative, the town could create a refuse district that would be cost neutral for the residents.

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Real Property and Equipment - All remaining property becomes the property of the whole town. This impact report did not explore potential uses of the buildings after they are not needed for the village, but this would be planned out during the development of a dissolution plan to ensure that residents of the village gain maximum benefit.

Roads, Skate Park, Sidewalks, Streetlights - Upon dissolution, the town would become solely responsible for providing these services. The roads and skate park would likely be maintained in a similar manner that they are today. The town would likely establish sidewalk and street lighting districts to provide these services and segregate the costs to the former village residents.

Water Service- From the customer end, there would be minor changes related to who sends the invoices and who sets the rates. Water service will be maintained after dissolution through the use of special district. The Town Board will likely govern the district and operate it in a similar manner that it is operated today.

Key Findings

A village tax payer would see some financial benefit (about \$284 for a median value home) with very little change to their services. This would be about an additional \$5.45 a week. This would be recurring savings each year. Most services would be delivered by the same organizations or people that do it today, but they would be organized through town special districts (water, streetlights, sidewalks) or absorbed directly into town

operations (zoning, road maintenance and cemetery).

The village residents would face reduced representation as they would only have one layer of local government representing 1,600 people and they would need to work cooperatively with all the town residents to receive the services they are seeking. Finally, some services and roles would go away altogether such as the village board, clerk and mayor.

Next Steps

Village residents will vote on November 13th to dissolve or keep their village government. If the decision is to dissolve, the Village Board will need to create a dissolution plan that will describe the actions that will be undertaken to dissolve the village and provide service to the residents after dissolution. Village residents will have an opportunity to engage in the development of the dissolution plan. The plan must be adopted by the Village Board within 180 days of the dissolution vote. After it is adopted, the plan is presented to the public and is subject to both revision and a referendum. The time between a vote for dissolution and the actual dissolution varies depending on the process but is usually more than a year. There are state grants available to defray costs specifically related to dissolution.

For the full report, go to www.cgr.org/van-etten.

Village of Van Etten Tax Schedule		
	Current	Potential
County	\$ 7.0644	\$ 7.0644
Community College	\$ 0.6077	\$ 0.6077
Library	\$ 0.6843	\$ 0.6843
Town	\$ 6.6459	\$ 5.2000
Fire	n/a	\$ 1.4000
Village	\$ 4.0112	\$ -
Sidewalk and Lights		\$ 0.9000
School	\$ 18.6172	\$ 18.6172
Total	\$ 37.63	\$ 34.47
Median Value Home Tax Bill	\$ 3,387	\$ 3,103