

Proposal

To:

The Town of Ossining

From:

Mr. Michael Conte

M. Conte Consulting

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2 May 2018

Supervisor Dana Levenberg
Town of Ossining
16 Croton Avenue
Ossining, New York 10562

Dear Supervisor Levenberg,

I have enjoyed our conversations in recent weeks regarding the Town's contemplation of its future and how we can educate, inform and learn more about the reactions of residents in response to the notion of *change*.

Based upon these conversations, I have drafted the following proposal for your consideration. I'm happy to discuss it with you at your convenience. Thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to the possibility of working with you.

Sincerely,

Michael Conte
President, M. Conte Consulting

Proposal

Background on M. Conte

M. Conte Consulting is the consulting practice of Michael Conte, the former CEO/owner of Syntax (a Long Island-based professional communications firm largely focused on the needs of public schools and other municipal organizations). Mr. Conte's experience with community-based organizations— school districts, libraries, fire districts and related non-profit entities— on Long Island and in Westchester, is substantial. He is quite familiar with the communities of Briarcliff and Ossining, having worked in both, and is equally familiar with the politics and community sensibilities of the region. Though he no longer resides in NY, Mr. Conte continues to consult with clients in the Westchester region.

The Project

Like most municipal entities in NY, the Town of Ossining seeks to establish and maintain a strong value proposition for the services delivered to taxpaying residents. The unequivocal burden of state and local taxation in New York, along with the obvious potential to deliver more cost-effective services in partnership with neighboring municipalities, has prompted the Town in recent years to examine the sharing of services. Some of these efforts have produced real savings for taxpayers.

Ossining Town leaders now ask whether a broader application of shared services can be envisioned, and the urgency of this notion has only expanded due to the recent Federal tax law changes that will undoubtedly impact a significant number of residents through loss of deductibility of SALT (State and Local Taxes) beyond \$10,000, thereby potentially *increasing* total household taxation.

Thus, the Town of Ossining has taken a firm step forward by applying for, and receiving, grant funding to examine, communicate, and possibly implement changes in both the structure of government and operational delivery of government services in order to maintain its commitment to taxpayers.

The objective now is to create an open dialogue with residents of the Town about the range of efforts that could be undertaken, and solicit feedback about whether (and how) to move forward. This has prompted the Town to seek professional assistance.

Proposal

M. Conte Consulting proposes to work with the Town as an educational consultant and researcher. The goal is to create and propagate materials that fully inform Town of Ossining residents so that they can be asked, in a more formal and personally convenient manner, what they believe is in the best interest of their Town. Informational materials will be strictly fact-based; it is acknowledged by both parties that the goal here is to inform, not to exhort or otherwise 'convince' residents of the worth of any facet of that which might be under consideration.

Services required to fully support an effort like this include:

- Expert writing
- Research (soft polling or related feedback mechanisms)
- Digital communication tools (e-blast, website, social media)
- Public dialogue creation and execution
- Graphic Design
- Media relations guidance

This proposal envisions the following service requirements/work products:

- Ongoing consultation with Town leaders to identify all facts (including hard costs, soft costs, and ancillary data) relevant to (at a minimum), the following:
 - a. Sharing services with neighboring municipalities
 - b. Elimination of certain elected and/or appointed offices and transference of duties
 - c. All current and past studies of sharing or consolidation efforts
 - d. 'Blue sky' concepts, e.g. issues like consolidation of services/entities
- Creation and maintenance of a dedicated website to convey all facts regarding research and findings into the issues identified above.
- Creation of an opt-in list of interested residents who agree to receive digital communications
- Creation of necessary print materials to alert residents to the existence of the website.
- Creation of feedback instruments, including self-select (not call-based) surveys to ascertain resident reaction to the aforementioned facts presented on the website.
- Creation of applicable media releases to recruit the assistance of media in spreading the word about the website and feedback tools.
- Organization of public dialogue for in-person input on presented facts.
- Aggregation of all findings in a written report.

M. Conte Consulting believes this process will take up to 12 weeks to complete, subsequent to execution of a contractual agreement.

The cost of this service is \$12,500. The Town of Ossining will be responsible for all printing and mailing costs, if utilized. Otherwise, there are no reimbursable or other expenses associated with this work.