



# TOWN OF OSSINING

*The Volunteer Spirited Town*

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**Catherine Borgia**  
*Supervisor*

May 10, 2011

To: Ossining Village Board, Richard Leins, Lori Lee Dickson, Ingrid Richards

From: Catherine Borgia

cc: Ossining Town Board, Wayne Spector, Connie Cerny, Jane Kanning, George Weeks, John Hamilton, Michael G O'Connor

Re: Village of Ossining Intermunicipal Agreement Proposal to the Town of Ossining, Highway Department, Building Department, Planning Department

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Thank you for your proposal for an Intermunicipal agreement to have the Village of Ossining provide Highway Department, Building Department and Planning Department for the unincorporated portion of the Town of Ossining. As I discussed with many of you, I feel this is an good jumping off place for our intermunicipal discussions about how to save taxpayers money while providing excellent services in these areas.

As you know, we received this proposal on Friday, 5/7 in anticipation of tonight's Joint Board Meeting, so the Town Board has not had a chance to meet to discuss this proposal. Therefore this is memo is merely a preliminary reflection of the questions and ideas I have in response to your proposal, based on my own reaction and several conversations I have had with other Town employees.

1. Joint Authority: Since the provision of Highway/DPW services is a critical component of the quality-of-life services provided by municipalities, it is difficult for a municipality not to have direct authority over how those services are provided and what resources get allocated to these functions. That is why I suggest that we create a consolidated department and form a Joint Authority to oversee the operations of the consolidated Highway/DPW department. The Authority can be comprised of an equal amount of elected or appointed officials from each municipality, and we can create an unpaid citizen advisory position. For purposes of illustration only, I have attached an example of a joint authority created for a regional storm water district in the southern part of Westchester County.
2. Financial arrangements: I recommend that we create a special district comprising residents of the Village of Ossining and the unincorporated part of the Town of Ossining which will use existing assessed values to raise property taxes to cover the expenses of the consolidated department. This will be a similar fashion to how the Ambulance District is funded, as a line on the Town tax bill for those within the district. The Joint Authority board can make the recommended budget presentation to the Town & Village boards, which will be discussed and negotiated in a joint board meeting. Once consensus has been reached, each board will pass a resolution in support of the budget. The
3. Union issues: The Village IMA proposal implies that Town Highway workers will be hired by the Village. However, we have a contract with the Teamsters, and as you know, New York State law gives ownership of the work to the union. Although the Town Board is empowered to enter into an

IMA with the Village, we are not empowered to give away union work without the consent of the union. Therefore, any successful consolidated department will require careful negotiation with both Teamsters and CSEA.

4. Savings opportunities in Village IMA proposal: Upon initial reading of the proposal, it appears that the savings accrued to the Town are from reduction in personnel numbers and salaries of town employees. In our previous for shared services and/or consolidations, we had a broad agreement that we would not reduce personnel and that we would protect the seniority of existing employees. Does this proposal represent a departure from this philosophy? What are the assumptions about the salary and job descriptions of the Town employees built into this proposal?
5. Service guarantees: I would like some backup information about how it was determined that Village personnel can accommodate all of the work currently done or contracted by the town. I would like backup documentation for each department proposed.
6. Debt: A new taxing district/joint authority can be created so that the new authority owns the real property of the district, and debt services can be spread out amount all taxpayers of the district. This will provide relief to Village taxpayers, and provide added security and opportunity for unincorporated Town residents. This is also an opportunity to plan our capital needs more efficiently to avoid future duplication. This will also be the first shared pool of assets form the population likely to be included in a future co-terminus Town/Village.
7. Contract renewal questions: What is the Village's proposal for how this contract will be structured for years subsequent to the first year? How will cost increases be passed along? How will decisions about capital purchases be made? What is the level of collaboration regarding service decisions between the two municipalities?
8. Water Services: Since we are discussing a broader reallocation of how municipal services are to be performed, I request that we also look at having the Water Fund operations be part of a broader Joint Authority/Tax district. This will provide additional resources to the Village for capital improvements to the water treatment plant, relieve the Village of the burden of paying property taxes on the water treatment property, and will provide water rate relief to the residents of the unincorporated area. This is also a long-term regional planning benefit, as stabilization of water supply is likely to become important in the next several decades.

Thank you for the work you have brought to the group as a basis of this conversation. I know that by working together we can devise a long term plan that will benefit all the residents that we serve.

Thank you.