

**PUBLIC HEARING
LOCAL LAW #1 OF 2014
TO ABOLISH POLICE DEPARTMENT
April 2, 2014**

**6:00PM Public Hearing – Local Law #1 of 2014 (Amended)
A local law to Abolish the East Syracuse Police Department**

Mayor Tackman called the hearing to order at 6:03PM.

Local Law No. 1 of 2014 reads as follows:

**Local Law No. 1 of 2014
Village of East Syracuse
To Abolish the East Syracuse Police Department**

The purpose of Local Law No. 1 of the year 2014 is to abolish the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Section 8-800 of NYS Village Law and to transfer the function of the East Syracuse Police Department to the Town of DeWitt Police Department and further enter into a proposed contract with the Town of DeWitt for the extension of additional police services within the Village of East Syracuse.

Section 1. Abolishing the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Section 8-800 of New York State Village Law and the transfer of function of the Village Police Department with the Town of DeWitt Police Department and further to enter into a proposed contract with the Town of DeWitt for the extension of additional police services with the Village of East Syracuse.

This Local Law is subject to a permissive referendum and will be put to the qualified voters of the Village of East Syracuse at a special election to be held and conducted on Wednesday, April 2, 2014.

This Local Law shall take effect upon the filing with the Secretary of State.

COMMENTS

Mayor Robert T. Tackman reported on the need to repeat the process to adopt an amended local law (from that previously approved on March 3rd) because the Town of DeWitt approved the Intermunicipal Agreement with a different term than that approved by the Village Board.

The term of the Agreement is now January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018. The Agreement as approved by the Village Board had the term to begin “upon abolishment”. The Town approved the Intermunicipal Agreement at a special session Friday, March 21, 2014. The Board of Trustees also met in special session later that day and accepted the changes and approved the Agreement.

The Agreement allows for the transfer of all five of the Village’s full time Officers and they have the choice to be assigned to the Village. The Village will be a separate “post” with a car located within the Village 24/7. The Town Police has the option of continuing to use the Village Municipal Building as a substation.

The cost for the Agreement is \$375,000 for four (4) years (until December 31, 2018).

The Mayor presented details in a short Powerpoint presentation outlining the terms of the Agreement as well as comparison of Villages in Onondaga County tax rates (East Syracuse is the highest), and estimates for changes should the proposal be approved.

The Village of East Syracuse current tax rate is \$16.41 (per assessed thousand). At this time the next fiscal year budget projects a tax rate at \$18.48 with the costs to maintain Police Department. Should the proposal be approved and with the Agreement to transfer the Officers the tax rate is estimated to be reduced to \$12.98 (based on County Comptroller report).

The Village is still working with the PBA Union on any impacts. Unable at this time to determine what those costs will be.

The Village will still have to operate the Police Department for six months until January 2015. Annual operating costs for the Police is estimated at between \$500,000 to \$1.1 million. Estimate that will add approximately \$550,000 to the budget and several hundred thousand for impact bargaining negotiations.

Moving forward Village residents will see a drop initially when no longer have police operations in our budget and again after the conclusion of the four year Agreement.

The Village undertook exploration of this proposal as a way to lower the Village tax rate. This is not anything against the Police of a questions or mis-management. The Village Board will continue to explore other options as well.

Jim O’Donnell asked if this has anything to do with Cuomo’s tax cap proposal.

Trustee Daniel J. Wagner commented that this proposal will help to show shared services.

Mayor Tackman stated he is not in favor of the Governor’s proposal as tied to the property tax cap and does not effect this year.

Pat Bacon asked if we would still see familiar faces.

Mayor Tackman replied that as of January 1st all five fulltime Officers will be Town of DeWitt Officers, in the same cars and patrolling the same coverage area should they chose to.

Gail O'Donnell restfully requests that the Board not do this now. Feels that other options have not been explored. Do not want to eliminate Police. The Study was done in 2009, things have changed since then. Would like to see if something other than emergency services could be eliminated.

Mayor Tackman reported that the Board needs to move forward on this proposal now. The next fiscal year budget must be adopted before May 1st. Already seen taxes go up.

Trustee Daniel Wagner remarked that other Villages are able to provide police services for less than East Syracuse can. They have higher assessed values and larger populations. It's simply unaffordable her. 35% of tax dollars goes for police.

Jim O'Donnell objected that other options are not being considered.

Trustee Wagner offered that if residents disagree with this option it is there right to vote it down. If you want to keep them, vote that way.

Gail O'Donnell expressed doubt in the projected tax savings that the County Comptroller provided. Cannot project the future what the Town will do.

Pat Bacon was concerned that not many people have attended these meetings. A lot of people in the Village do not know about his.

Mayor Tackman reports that the Village has plans to send out two mailings to all the residents. Could not send anything out before tonight's decisions.

Lucy Anne Forkhamer asked where the \$375,000 is coming from.

Mayor Tackman stated that this will be a budget item paid by Village taxpayers.

Trustee Daniel Wagner estimated that the Police cost \$1.1 million. The Town of DeWitt calculated that the costs for them to absorb the Officers and provide one car 24/7 is \$775,000. This will be paid for by the Village paying \$375,000 annually and taxing Village residents the \$400,000 balance.

Lucy Anne Forkhamer expressed concern that the Town can stop providing Police coverage to the Village anytime it wants.

Town of DeWitt Councilor Kerry Mannion state that the Town must and will provide coverage to the Village of East Syracuse. The Village is part of the Town. The Contract provides for additional coverage of one car in the Village at all times.

Lucy Anne Forkhamer reports that she has studied the Village budget. She could cut \$500,000 out in five minutes. DPW is sky high. There are too many full time Village employees with benefits. Feels it is not a transparent budget. It's difficult to find things.

Trustee Daniel Wagner reports that the DPW budget is in line with the operations and duties.

Mayor Robert Tackman stated that not blaming any department. The Board has looked at and is still considering layoffs in every department.

Jim O'Donnell questioned where the revenue from tickets written will go. Doesn't think it's to the Village.

Mayor Tackman explained that the Court determines the fine based upon how the ticket is written. Anything written to a Village law goes to the Village.

Trustee Wagner reports that the Village Court costs 35 cents /thousand to operate the Court. The Police costs \$6/1000.

Gail O'Donnell reported she attended the Town meeting when they approved the Agreement. Wants to know why two of the Councilors voted against it.

Town of DeWitt Councilor Jamie Frank stated that he voted against it because he doesn't think it's best fiscally or operationally. As a CPA would like to see a five year business plan. Thinks the Village is hurrying into this. Moving too fast without a plan in place.

Pat Bacon asked if the agreement includes the building and the cars.

Mayor Tackman reports that the agreement includes taking possession of the cars and can use the Municipal Building as a local substation. Many of the Village's police cars are old with a lot of miles.

Trustee Wagner noted that many vehicles were purchased with grant money or DWI funds.

Trustee Wagner repeated that people will have the choice to vote on this. If they want to keep paying more in taxes vote to keep things the way they are. Residents can see a 17% saving this year and 31% the next.

Gail O'Donnell objected that the Town tax will go up.

Unidentified Gentleman stated he's looking at the numbers. Wants to understand what this truly means. The cost of the Police will go from \$1.1 million down to \$375,000 for the contract in the Village budget. The Town will then tax Village residents \$400,000 for balance of cost to take Police and cover the Village.

Trustee Wagner reports that Village residents will pay \$2.30 more /1000 to collect the \$400,000. Next year when the Village does not fund a half year police operations the costs will go down. Then a further decrease in subsequent years.

Mayor Tackman noted because of the timing and the different start for the fiscal years for the Village and the Town the Village will have to carry the costs in this next budget for half a year. After January they will in the Town. Starting in the 2015/2016 budget and 3 years after that it will just be \$375,000 for the contract.

Trustee Jim Carr commented that this is what happened last time. People get bogged down in what it is going to cost. The truth of the matter is that we are down to five officers from a few years ago when we had 8 or 9. Police services cost a lot. To have to hire more officers will cost \$200,000. Have to train them and pay their pensions. The Village will have to buy more cars. The 1.1 million will only go up, to more like \$1.6 million real quick. Costs keep escalating to the point that the Village cannot afford it.

Gail O'Donnell repeated her request that the Board look at other options.

Trustee Carr said we've been looking at this for four years. There is no other option where the Village can save \$1.1 million.

Mayor Tackman remarked that the Village is here to provide services to its residents. This Board has already had to make serious cuts. Eliminated the flowers, took out economic development money. Hard to attract people to come here when they see our \$16.41 tax rate. Why would they pay that when they can go to blocks and not pay a Village tax.

Understand that people want to keep what they have but the Village is struggling to maintain current levels.

Pointed out that neighboring Villages in Town of Manlius have done this. Since 1985 Town of Manlius has provided police coverage for the Village of Minoa, the Village of Fayetteville and the Village of Manlius. All of those Villages are doing fine.

Russell Richman stated that if this proposal votes taxes are going to go up. The increase from the Town will be easier to take because it is spread out over the entire Town.

Town of DeWitt Councilor Kerr Mannion commented that the reduction in assessment hurts the Village. Assessments go down but costs keep going up. Police is obviously the most expensive service the Village has. Firmly believe that the Town can manage this change correctly. The Town of DeWitt is an excellent Police Department. There will be no

issue in melding the Village force to the Town. Do not anticipate the taxes going up for Village residents. The Town's rate has stayed below the 2% property tax cap.

Town of DeWitt Jamie Frank again expressed his opinion that the Agreement handcuffs the operations of the Police. Feel that could be better done without the 24/7 coverage in the Agreement and letting the Chief determine property coverage for the area.

Understands that Village residents will not accept the loss of police without the increased coverage and taking the five Officers.

Lucy Anne Forkhamer stated that getting rid of the Police is not going to fix anything. The Police look good in their budget. The people don't get to have a say in anything. Everything is already decided.

Trustee Wagner suggested that she run for Trustee next year.

Ellen Robb objected saying that she appreciates the Board holding these public hearings and offering the chance to vote on this important issue. The Board themselves are elected to act on our behalf. People do have a say. But they need to be involved in the process.

Mayor Tackman reported that the Board is here to make fiscal decisions as to what is best for the Village.

Jim O'Donnell complained that this is the 4th hearing on this. People are upset that there is no other option and no time to discuss it.

Mayor Tackman noted that this has been before the Board since last Fall and there have been multiple discussions. The Board has listened to people. The taxes in east Syracuse are too high. Would have liked more time but the decision has to be made. We need to know for this budget how we are going to move forward.

If people vote to keep the Police Department then other things will have to go. The Police Department will be downsized. Other staff positions will be eliminated. Fireworks will be gone, senior programs will be cut and the pool will be shut down.

Trustee Wagner reported that employees have not had a raise in 4 years.

Mayor Tackman continued that expectation will be lowered. If keep the Police Department will need to purchase more vehicles. Last year everything was cut to minimal levels. Services will have to be cut. Revenues have dropped. Assessments have dropped. DPW and Fire Department already operate frugally. There isn't fund balance anymore to offset budget, that's why taxes go up.

Wayne Cunningham commented that he has been to every hearing on this proposal. DeWitt Police came to one of the meetings and the people abused them. They tried to tell

us how they'd cover eh Village but people told them to get out. The proposal was voted down in 2012 – and taxes went up. As a businessman I don't get to vote but I am greatly concerned what the high taxes do to the businesses. Businesses are leaving East Syracuse. There are empty storefronts all up and down West Manlius Street.

Something has to change. We have to find a way to make taxes go down.

I applaud the Board for trying. They've taken a lot of abuse too.

Mayor Tackman recounted a story on how he tried to recruit a business to relocate to East Syracuse. Once told the tax rate was 16.41 they went someplace else. The County took away sales tax revenue. We are left with nothing to offer as incentives. All I can provide is a high tax rate.

Gail O'Donnell asked if any efforts have been made to talk to the County.

Mayor Tackman reported he has talked with the County. We have the support of the Mayor's Association and NYCOM, but no one in Albany can offer any help. Spoke with the Governor's Office just this morning. No one is offering anything unless full out abolishment.

Gail O'Donnell suggested that the Village draft a letter for residents to send to local representatives seeking their help.

Trustee Wagner reported on the costs for Police services. Police cost \$6/1000 in the East Syracuse. North Syracuse does it for \$2.50/1000. This Board needs to do what is fiscally responsible.

Gail O'Donnell commented that we don't mind paying more.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Tackman closed the Hearing at 7:28PM.

Special Meeting
Village of East Syracuse
Board of Trustees
April 2, 2014

Mayor Robert T. Tackman called the special meeting of the Village of East Syracuse Board of Trustees to order at 7:32PM.

Present: Trustee James E. Carr, Jr., Trustee Carol Para, Deputy Mayor Barbara Falcone Quonce, Trustee Daniel J. Wagner, and Mayor Robert T. Tackman.

Also Present: Village Clerk Patricia J. Derby

Approximately 40 Village residents and guests attended including Town of DeWitt Supervisor Ed Michalenko, Town of DeWitt Councilors Jack Dooling, Kerry Mannion, Joey Chiarenza and Jamie Frank, Former Village Mayor Tony Albanese, Village of East Syracuse Police Officers Peter Hooser and Dale Barhite, former ESFD Chief's Tom Brewster, Michael Cramer, and Jim Brewster, EAVES Director Vincent Stevenson, Planning Board members: Dick Robb, Bob Murphy, David Boldt, and Liz Landry, ZBA members Ellen Robb and Pat Bacon, and Housing Authority Chairperson sally M. Seeley. Representatives from *Eagle News*, *WSTM CNY Central*, and *Time Warner YNN* also attended.

Local Law No. 1, of 2014

Motion – by Trustee Wagner, seconded by Trustee Carr -To adopt Local Law No. 1 of 2014, abolishing the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Village Law Section 8-800. This Local Law and resolution are subject to a referendum of qualified voters within the Village of East Syracuse to be held April 2, 2014. The Village conducted a public hearing on the matter as well as participated in detailed fact finding.

Local Law No. 1 of 2014 reads as follows:

Local Law No. 1 of 2014
Village of East Syracuse
To Abolish the East Syracuse Police Department

The purpose of Local Law No. 1 of the year 2014 is to abolish the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Section 8-800 of NYS Village Law and to transfer the function of the East Syracuse Police Department to the Town of DeWitt Police Department and further enter into a proposed contract with the Town of DeWitt for the extension of additional police services within the Village of East Syracuse.

Section 1. Abolishing the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Section 8-800 of New York State Village Law and the transfer of function of the Village Police Department with the Town of DeWitt Police Department and further to enter into a proposed contract with the Town of DeWitt for the extension of additional police services with the Village of East Syracuse.

This Local Law is subject to a permissive referendum and will be put to the qualified voters of the Village of East Syracuse at a special election to be held and conducted on Wednesday, April 2, 2014.

This Local Law shall take effect upon the filing with the Secretary of State.

Polling the Board: Trustee Carr – aye, Deputy Mayor Quonce – nay, Trustee Wagner – aye, Trustee Para – nay, and Mayor Tackman – aye. Motion carried.

Special Election

Motion – by Trustee Carr, seconded by Trustee Wagner - To call for a Special Election pursuant to Section 9 of the Village Law to be held Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at the Village of East Syracuse Municipal Building for all qualified electors within the Village of East Syracuse for the purpose of voting by machine on the adoption or rejection of Local Law adopted by resolution of the Village Board of Trustees on April 2, 2014 abolishing the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Village Law. The voting hours shall be 12:00 Noon to 9:00PM.

A copy of the Village Board resolution authorizing this action after the conduction of a public hearing shall be published and posted in accordance with the Village Law. Also, a copy of this resolution shall be placed on file in the Office of the Village Clerk.

Whereas, the Village of East Syracuse Board of Trustees has at a meeting duly called, held and conducted public hearings on January 6, 2014 and February 3, 2014, and again on April 2, 2014 adopting a resolution abolishing the Village of East Syracuse Police Department pursuant to Village Law Section 8-800 which does not take effect until a proposition for the approval thereof has been approved at a Special Election by qualified voters of the Village; and

Whereas, this Village Board desires to call such a Special Election for said Village for submission of such proposition; and

Now, Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of the Village of East Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York as follows:

Section 1. A Special Election of the qualified electors of the Village of East Syracuse, Onondaga County, shall be held on the **16th day of April, 2014**, at the Municipal Building in said Village located at 204 North Center Street, East Syracuse, New York, for the purpose of

voting on a proposition with respect to the adoption of Local Law No. 1 referred above. Voting shall be by machine and the polls at such Special Election shall be kept open between the hours of 12:00 o'clock noon to 9:00PM, Local Time.

Section 2. The Village Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to give notice of such Special Election by publication in the *Eagle Bulletin*, newspaper in said Village, the first publication of such notice to be made at least ten (10) days prior to the time of such Special Election. In addition, the Village Clerk shall post or cause to be posted a copy of such notice on the Municipal Building bulletin board at least ten (10) days prior to such election. Said notice shall be in substantially the following form, to wit:

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION
Village of East Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a Special Election of the Village of East Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York, will be held for qualified electors in said Village solely at the Municipal Building located at 204 North Center Street, in East Syracuse, New York on April 16, 2014. The Polls will be kept open from 12:00 o'clock noon to 9:00PM, local time for the purposes of voting by machine on the adoption or rejection of Local Law #1 of 2014 of the Village of East Syracuse dated April 2, 2014, a copy of which is on file at the office of the Village Clerk at the Municipal Building where it may be inspected during normal business hours.

The polls will be kept open for the purpose of voting by machine on substantially the form of the following, to wit:

Shall the Village of East Syracuse adopt Local Law No. 1 of the year 2014 abolishing the Village of East Syracuse Police department pursuant to Section 8-800 of the NYS Village Law, and perform a Transfer of Function/Consolidation of the Village of East Syracuse Police Department with the Town of DeWitt Police Department, and further should the Village contract with the Town of DeWitt for the extension of additional police services within the Village of East Syracuse as proposed.

NOTE: The form of proposition appearing on the voting machine may be abbreviated due to space constraints.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that persons qualified to vote at such Special Election shall be qualified electors of the Village of East Syracuse, Onondaga County who shall vote at a single polling place of the Municipal Building, located at 204 North Center Street, in East Syracuse, New York. This Special Election shall be conducted in accordance with the applicable rules set forth in Election Law and Article 9 of the Village Law.

Dated: April 2, 2014
By Order of the Board of Trustees
Village of East Syracuse
Patricia J. Derby

Village Clerk

Section 3. The following persons are hereby selected from the list of election inspectors and ballot clerks previously designated by this Village Board for election purposes, pursuant to Election Law, to act as election inspectors and ballot clerks for the Special Election to be held April 2, 2014:

Russell Richman
Patricia Bacon
Lucy Anne Forkhamer
Robert Murphy

Section 4. The persons named above shall be paid the sum of seventy-five (\$75.00) dollars each for their services.

Section 5. This resolution shall take effect upon filing with the Village Clerk.

Polling the Board: Trustee Carr – aye, Deputy Mayor Quonce – aye, Trustee Wagner – aye, Trustee Para – aye, and Mayor Tackman – aye. Motion carried.

Mayor Tackman reported that copies of the Intermunicipal Agreement with the Town of DeWitt, the Onondaga County Comptroller's Report and the fact sheet prepared by the Town of DeWitt Comptroller will all be available at the Village Office.

The Notice of the Special Election states the proposition as it will appear on the voting machine and the absentee ballot. It is a yes or no question – in favor of the proposal vote yes, oppose vote no.

Village will prepare a couple of mailers to get information out to the residents. Mayor will be speaking to various civic group and local senior gatherings, as well as Neighborhood Watch Group.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34PM.