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Blasdell rejects study on dissolving village

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The first local litmus test for eliminating village government failed Tuesday when Blasdell voters defeated a referendum calling for a study to dissolve their village.

The referendum went down, 187-83, while two proposals limiting elected officials' terms and reducing their salaries passed by a greater margin.

Village Administrator Janet Plarr explained the outcome by saying that residents in Blasdell know what they want.

"Folks that live in a village have come to expect certain services; they're quality-of-life issues. The fire, police, water [departments] have a different way of responding," Plarr said. "I think people realize that bigger government means bigger bureaucracy."

Kevin Gaughan, who scored victories earlier this month in West Seneca and Evans, where his down-sizing campaign resulted in local votes to reduce the number of seats on those town boards, was anything but discouraged by the outcome of Wednesday's vote. He said he planned to force a referendum on the November ballot anyway.

When questioned about the notion that the residents of Blasdell already had spoken through the defeated referendum Wednesday, he vehemently disputed the idea.

"It was rejected because of the wording," Gaughan said. "It was designed in an effort to stop this movement. All the vote shows is that people don't want another study."

He said his referendum would differ from the one village officials offered Wednesday in that it would ask for an outright dissolution of the village rather than a feasibility study to look at a merger of Blasdell and the Town of Hamburg.

For a forced referendum to appear on a ballot, two-thirds of registered voters need to call for it. In Blasdell, that translates to about 900 people. Gaughan said his volunteers have been out circulating petitions for some time and,



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along with downsizing votes in Orchard Park, Alden and Cheektowaga this November, he fully expects Blasdell residents to get a second chance on deciding whether or not they want to close down their village government.

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