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BARKER

Panel to study dissolving village

By Teresa Sharp
NIAGARA CORRESPONDENT

BARKER — At the recent request of a longtime resident, Mayor Jo Ann Greenwald is forming a committee to study the advantages and disadvantages of dissolving Barker village government.

“One of our residents, Neal Gordon, asked us to look into the feasibility of this and we’ve asked our village attorney, Dan Seaman, to give us an overview of the process,” Greenwald said.

Greenwald said she is appointing a small committee from the Village Board “to meet a couple of times a month” to discuss the issue.

“I hope to start the meetings in May, and they will be open to the public, and everyone is welcome to come,” she said.

Gordon, who moved into the village in 1965, said his request “is purely economical.”


“For years, I’ve heard the pros and cons, and I requested that the Village Board assemble the information and let the people decide once and for all,” he said.


“If I had an opinion on this, I wouldn’t voice it because it would be irrelevant. I want to let the people decide, but without the facts, no one can make that decision.”

Just last month, Greenwald was re-elected mayor of this tiny village of 577 for her second consecutive two-year term.

“I don’t know if it’s good or bad — I’ll just wait for the facts,” she said. “I just want whatever is best for the taxpayers and for the residents here. I want the public to be thoroughly informed of the advantages and disadvantages of this.


“With our village budget, we’ve been handicapped,” she said. “All we have is our sales tax and our property tax


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— our resources are very limited. This is a common problem for so many small villages. We're doing the best we can.”

Last week, the Village Board adopted a \$364,657 budget, which holds the line on the tax rate at \$7.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

Greenwald said Somerset Supervisor Richard Meyers has pledged support for studying the issue.

“Richard said he'd work with us so that we can get an accurate picture,” she added. “The Town Board will not assist us monetarily, but the town has to become involved in order to give us facts and figures.”

“If the Village Board requests our help with this study, we'll get them the numbers to help determine if this is financially viable,” Meyers said. “We, as a Town Board, don't have an opinion on this [issue], but it would be good to have a study and go from there.”

Greenwald said the issue had been discussed about three decades ago.


“I know there was a big public meeting at the fire hall, and I was living here at the time, but I don't remember if it was a true referendum,” she said. “I do know the idea was voted down.”

Just last year, Barker celebrated the 100th anniversary of its incorporation as a village.

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