

## SUMMARY OF THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE NEW PALTZ GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

It may be semantics on my part to distinguish between what the Committee has recommended to our two governments and what the study contains. The study is exactly that, a huge document presenting voluminous data.\* The **recommendations** are what the committee gleaned from the study and reflect what the majority of the members believe are in the future best interest of our community.

It is important for all members of Boards and the community to know clearly what the Steering Committee has recommended, because it is all too easy to get lost in all the material presented in the study. This summary is presented for clarification in order that the work of the Joint Boards leading to a referendum for the community may move forward as much work has yet to be done.

The Fairweather study was developed and presented to provide important information to the committee and to guide the committee through the myriad of the two governments as we know them. From our many meetings over 18 months, the committee formulated a number of recommendations and decisions, which will be listed, culminating in our final recommendation (apparent best option) agreed by an 8 to 1 majority vote on October 31, 2011. That recommendation is: **"THE NEW PALTZ GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE CREATION OF A CONSOLIDATED COTERMINOUS TOWN/VILLAGE, ACTING PRINCIPALLY AS A VILLAGE, UNDER THE CONDITION THAT THE INITIAL CONSOLIDATED BUDGET HAS NO INCREASE IN TAXES DUE TO GOVERNMENT CONSOLIDATION."**

**This overall recommendation includes the following specific recommendations:**

- 1. A single governing board for coterminous town/village**
- 2. One board with 5-7 members (5 at large, 1 from Ward based on Village boundaries, 1 from ward based on Town outside village boundary. One of the at large members is elected as the Chief Elected Officer [Mayor].**
- 3. One Clerk who is appointed**
- 4. The positions of DPW/Highway Superintendent are eliminated and combined with Highway, Buildings & Grounds, Sewer and Water and one Superintendent is appointed.**
- 5. Non partisan elections run by the County.**
- 6. Fire protection is run by a Volunteer Fire Department**

**7. Water/Sewer services are provided by one benefit district where geographically possible; where not by separate benefit districts**

**8. Other amenities such as sidewalks, lighting are covered by separate benefit districts, costs covered by benefited properties.**

**The committee also agreed a coterminous government has many other benefits that are not fiscal and that our recommendations are premised on the assumption that there may not be increases in revenue despite potential sources such as the Consolidation Incentive Payments from the NYS Division of Budget.**

It was discovered the law of            includes coterminous as a form of consolidation of governments. The 2010-11 state budget provides for a Citizen Empowerment Tax Credit to provide incentive funding for local government consolidation. However, this funding inadvertently, as a consequence of continuing definitions in Sec 54 of the state finance law, neglects to include coterminous consolidation of a village/town. **The NPGEPS**

**Committee therefore recommends the two governing bodies acting together petition The NPGEPS Assemblyman Kevin Cahill and Senator John Bonacic to amend the state finance law.**

It is further recommended that all incentive aid offered for merging/consolidating governments be pursued.

Sally Rhoads

Member of the New Paltz Government Efficiency Project Steering Committee and  
Deputy Mayor of the Village of New Paltz

February 2, 2012

\* The Committee is extremely grateful to Fairweather Consulting who were contractually obligated to a 12 month study, but in fact spent 18 months with the Committee helping us to conclude our work and formulate our final recommendations to you the Village and Town Boards of New Paltz.