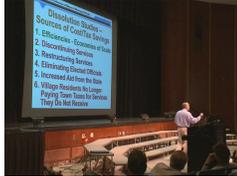


Depew dissolution vote set for January

Kelly Dudzik, WGRZ 11:38 PM, EDT October 06, 2016



DEPEW, N.Y. -- In January, voters in Depew will decide whether to dissolve their village.

Supporters of the dissolution got enough valid signatures last month on a petition to force a vote.

If the village of around 16,000 people votes to dissolve, Transit Road would be the dividing line with some neighbors being absorbed by Cheektowaga and some by the Town of Lancaster.

There is still a lot we still don't know. Because of the way state law is written, the Village of Depew only hires a consultant to come up with a plan if voters decide to dissolve. People in favor of dissolving say rising debt in Depew is a big issue and that it's gone from roughly \$2 million to \$8 million in recent years. Thursday we found out property owners in Depew would still be responsible for that debt even if the village is dissolved.

The New York State Conference of Mayors held a forum to go over the process, but the presenter couldn't answer a lot of the questions about taxes and services because there is no plan.

"They did this before having a cost study done. Normally, they're actually doing this reverse. How do village people and the taxpayer know if this is actually going to save them money? So we don't know for sure, you know, whether this is going to happen or not. It could go up," says Village Preservation Party of Depew Chairman Juliano Pecora.

Cheektowaga's Town Supervisor says if the village is dissolved police officers would be welcome to apply to work for the Cheektowaga Police Department. She also said they are over-staffed in sanitation and that they wouldn't need any more workers in that department.

Here's what she said when asked if Cheektowaga is ready to absorb new residents.

"They do pay taxes into the Town of Cheektowaga, so absolutely. We're willing to do whatever they are ready to vote on. If they want to become a part of Cheektowaga, we are ready to take them on. A lot of the services we already are providing to the village residents, so we would have no problem doing that," said Cheektowaga Town Supervisor Diane Benczkowski.

If voters decide not to dissolve Depew, another vote on this issue wouldn't be allowed for four years.

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