

**County-Wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan
Draft Plan Submittal to the Yates County Legislature
and the New York Department of State**

August 1, 2017

NARRATIVE

On April 10, 2017, Governor Cuomo signed into law Chapter 59, Laws of 2017, enacting the New York State Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18. Among the bill's provisions unrelated to appropriations was the creation of a new State mandate upon each county to convene a Shared Services Panel, comprised of representatives from each city, town and village within a county, with optional participation by school districts, BOCES and special improvement districts.

With little notice, and on an abbreviated timeline, Chapter 59 charged these Panels, led by each County's Chief Executive Officer, with identifying collaborative opportunities for shared services that would yield property tax savings for County residents.

On April 21, the Yates County Administrator, as Chief Executive Officer pursuant to Chapter 59, invited town supervisors, village mayors and school superintendents to attend the first meeting of the Yates County Shared Services Panel on May 8, 2017. In an effort to facilitate discussion, the County Administrator included with the invitation copies of Chapter 59's provisions creating the Panels, the New York State Department of State (DOS) Countywide Shared Services Document and the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Shared Services Report, "Working Together."

On May 8, the Shared Service Panel convened with a total of 27 present, including seven out of nine Town Supervisors, all four Village Mayors and four members of the Yates County Legislature. The Chairman narrated a presentation setting forth the Panel's goals under Chapter 59 and the responsibilities of the Members and Chair.

Panel Members reviewed the type of shared services discussed in both the NYSAC and DOS publications, including combined justice courts, health insurance consortia, real property tax assessment and collection, police services, trash collection, information technology and animal control.

Following discussion of the merits and challenges of the opportunities presented, the Panel determined to proceed with consideration of two major initiatives: consolidation of justice courts and developing or joining a health insurance consortium. Panel members formed working groups to consider financial and legal feasibility of each of the two initiatives. Members agreed to schedule a follow-up public hearing for the evening of May 30.

On May 30, the Shared Service Panel convened with a total of 18 present, including six out of nine Town Supervisors, two School Superintendents, one Town Councilmember, one County Legislator and seven members of the media and public.

The public hearing evolved into a dialogue between members of the public and members of the Panel, during which the merits and shortcomings of suggested shared services were thoroughly discussed. With public input, and following discussion, the Panel determined to continue its focus on consolidation of justice courts and health insurance consortia. The Panel determined to meet again during the month of July.

On July 27, the Shared Services Panel reconvened, with a total of 19 present, including eight out of nine Town Supervisors, one Mayor and eight County Legislators, to discuss its recommendations for a Draft Shared Services Plan to be submitted to the Yates County Legislature.

Workgroups reported back to the Panel on the two previously-designated topics of consolidation of justice courts and the establishment of a health insurance consortium.

With respect to the consolidation of justice courts, the workgroup advised that in two of the nine Town Courts, revenues exceeded expenses. For the remaining seven Town Courts, expenses exceeded revenues by a total of approximately \$58,000 on total Court costs of approximately \$200,000 in those seven towns.

The workgroup also discussed County costs, primarily the appearance costs of prosecution and defense attorneys as well as Sheriff's Department costs for prisoner transport. Given current staffing for the District Attorney's Office and the County's indigent defense offices, reduction in personnel costs appeared unlikely to result from court consolidation. Projected savings in mileage and transport costs were not fully available.

Factors noted as barriers to the establishment of a countywide district justice court included the need for such a district to be comprised of contiguous towns, as well as the division of two of the County's villages among multiple towns, each of which might or might not choose to participate in a district court. The Panel also discussed the role of State legislation in easing barriers to establishment of a district court.

With respect to developing or joining a health insurance consortium, the workgroup advised that the county's status as an experience-rated insured would preclude the County from taking advantage of the community-rating status enjoyed by towns and villages. The workgroup was awaiting further information about the possibility of towns and villages acting together with a single broker to combine their purchasing power, if not their risk rating.

Following presentation of these options, the Panel determined that each strategy offered the possibility of material cost savings to participating jurisdictions.

At the same time, the Panel determined that the process and timeline set forth in Chapter 59, combined with the limited resources available to the task, were insufficient to assure certifiable cost reductions and savings within the time allotted.

The Panel recognized the value of the process and the identification of possible opportunities for efficiency and cost reduction. Yates County's Town Supervisors and Village Mayors meet regularly during the year as the Yates County Community Readiness Initiative.

Through the Readiness Initiative, the Panel will in the future continue the work initiated under the Shared Services process and continue its pursuit of further options for service consolidation and cost reduction.

Local governments in Yates County, as represented by the Supervisors and Mayors on the Panel, and the County Legislators in attendance, have a long, strong record of collaboration in the taxpayers' best interest.

Following is a table including some of the initiatives already put in place by Yates County's town, village and county governments:

| PARTNERS | | AGREEMENT |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| County of Yates | All jurisdictions | Animal control enforcement |
| Keuka Lake Outlet Compact | | Management by 8 municipalities of dam / gates of the Keuka Lake Outlet |
| Town of Middlesex | County of Yates | Snow Plowing and Sanding |
| Town of Middlesex | County of Yates | Road Side Mowing |
| Town of Middlesex | State of New York | Snow Plowing and Sanding |
| Town of Milo | County of Yates | Snow Plowing and Sanding |
| Town of Milo | County of Yates | Road Side Mowing |
| Town of Milo | Keuka Watershed Improvement Cooperative | Uniform enforcement of wastewater regulations |
| Town of Milo | Town of Middlesex / Village of Penn Yan | Shared tax assessor |
| Town of Milo | Village of Dresden | Water service backup personnel and equipment |
| Town of Milo | Village of Dundee | Recreation program |
| Town of Milo | Village of Penn Yan | Water system services and monitoring |
| Town of Milo | Village of Penn Yan | Water and sewer billing |
| Town of Milo | Village of Penn Yan | Fire Department services |
| Town of Milo | Village of Penn Yan | Clean-Up Day |
| Town of Milo | Yates County Soil and Water Conservation District | Watershed Inspections |
| Town of Starkey | County of Yates / Various Towns | Hauling of road materials |
| Town of Starkey | Dundee Central Schools | Storage of bulk salt |
| Various Towns | Various Towns | Highway Labor and Equipment |

| PARTNERS | | AGREEMENT |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Village of Dundee | County of Yates | Indemnification agreement |
| Village of Dundee | State of New York | Services, materials and equipment |
| Village of Dundee | Towns of Milo, Starkey, Barrington and Tyrone | Youth Program |
| Village of Penn Yan | County of Yates | Generation of Real Property Tax Billing Data |
| Village of Penn Yan | County of Yates | Elections Process and Administration |
| Village of Penn Yan | County of Yates / Various Towns | Equipment sharing (informal) |
| Village of Penn Yan | Town of Jerusalem | Code Enforcement Backup |
| Village of Penn Yan | Town of Milo | Water service billing |
| Village of Penn Yan | Towns of Barrington, Benton, Jerusalem and Milo | Fire coverage |
| Village of Penn Yan | Towns of Benton, Jerusalem, Milo, Pulteney / Village of Dresden | Water Treatment Plant |
| Village of Penn Yan | Towns of Jerusalem and Milo | Wastewater Treatment Plant |

In closing, the Panel also notes the significant impact of unfunded state mandates on local property taxes in New York State. Local costs for Medicaid, indigent defense and other programs and functions, whose eligibility and service levels are established in Albany and elsewhere, cost as much as 25 cents of every Yates County property tax dollar

In addition to this submittal to the Yates County Legislature, the Shared Services Panel will hold three public hearings during the months of August and September to receive testimony on the Plan and its findings. Following the hearings and receipt of the Yates County Legislature's recommendations, the Shared Services Panel will hold a public meeting to vote on a Final Plan.

Given the Panel's review of the options before it, the determination of its members to continue working together elsewhere on the issues raised during the Panel process, and their record of collaboration in the taxpayers' interest, the Yates County Shared Services Panel regards its Chapter 59 mandates as satisfied upon the adoption of a Final Plan.

The Yates County Shared Services Panel appreciates this opportunity to serve the public.