

Village Board Statement to Voters on Dissolution 3/5/16

We firmly believe that dissolution is clearly not in the best interests of the Village of Brockport. However, we also believe in the democratic process that gives you a say in the future of your village.

Brockport has made great strides since dissolution was soundly defeated in 2010 by:

- Restoring dignity, harmony and effectiveness to the Village Board;
- Bringing the village from fiscal distress to an appropriate fund balance;
- Keeping the tax levy under the tax cap every year, including 2016-17, despite the cap being virtually flat.

We have sought and secured outside income to ease your tax burden and improve your quality of life by

- Contracting for solar power for municipal buildings, the Fire District and the Library with projected savings of \$1.5 million over 25 years.
- Taking steps to buy our streetlights from National Grid with considerable cost savings.
- Working with our state legislators and SUNY municipalities for passage of the SUNY Impact Aid bill that would reimburse municipalities for services provided to their SUNY colleges *and* lower our tax levy.
- Applying for and receiving since 2010 more than \$886,000 in grants to benefit you by upgrading our infrastructure, improving our parks, planting trees, rehabbing Main Street businesses, and helping to preserve our Victorian village on the Erie Canal.
- Cutting costs through shared services with the Town of Sweden, the College at Brockport, two other villages and nearby towns.

Brockport is a “college town” and the College is a cultural and economic asset to this community. We partner with the College and Sweden in a revitalized Town/Gown Committee to address issues of communication and community outreach, landlord/tenant relations, and neighborhood quality of life for students and residents.

Water rates have been a talking point for the dissolutionists. Dissolution would not reduce water rates for over half of Brockport households. Customers using 40,000 gallons or less annually would pay more to Monroe County Water Authority. Only very large water users, predominantly rentals, currently pay more. Our water fund keeps our water infrastructure in good repair, and provides you with immediate attention to water main breaks and water hookups. The cost of village-billed water includes the bond payoff for the Main Street Reconstruction, which will continue even if the village dissolves.

Were the village to dissolve, the Brockport police department would be eliminated. We have had a police force since 1829. The County Sheriff’s Department cannot police a population of 8400 (16,000 nine months of the year). The 14 other SUNY municipalities with local police forces agree.¹ The Sheriff’s Department is first rate, but cannot match the community knowledge or response time of the Brockport police. No densely populated area is crime free; drugs and crime are a factor in Brockport. Our police are expensive, as is every police force, but they are essential to keeping us and our businesses safe and secure.

Eleven villages have voted to dissolve since 2010, nine with fewer than 2000 people.² The two most populous (Lyons, 3619, Seneca Falls, 6681) had special situations. Both had tax rates much higher than Brockport’s and Seneca Falls joined a town with a very profitable landfill. The Lyons dissolution plan called for a town-wide police force, but the town denied it.

Only 10% of registered voters can force a dissolution referendum. Collecting 339 certified signatures took a year and a half. No creditable dissolution plan can be created in the time available. Even were a plan developed, the Town Board could abandon it at will after dissolution.

At a special meeting on March 5th the village board set the dissolution vote for Tuesday, May 24 at Village Hall.

We hope that we have made our position clear. We will continue to provide you with factual information to help you make an informed decision. Meanwhile, it’s back to work as your Village Board.

¹ Only Stony Brook (Suffolk County police) and Morrisville (State Police) do not have local police.

² These are: Atmar (407), East Randolph (620), Edwards (439), Keesville (1815), Limestone (389), Lyons (3619), Macedon (1523), Perrysburg (401), Port Henry (1194), Randolph (1286), Seneca Falls (6681).