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Keeseville voters will decide their future today

By LOHR McKINSTRY

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KEESEVILLE — Voters in the Village of Keeseville will go to the polls today to determine if their municipality's existence should continue.

The dissolution referendum is from noon to 9 p.m. at the Keeseville Village Hall on Liberty Street.

If Keeseville is dissolved, its property and some functions would be taken over by the towns in which the village sits, Chesterfield in Essex County and AuSable in Clinton County.

A dissolution study said taxes might decrease for those with a home assessed at \$100,000 or more, while new special-district taxes and fees could surpass current village tax bills for those with lower assessments.

The towns would divide up water and sewer services for former village residents if Keeseville dissolved. Village employees would also be given first chance at openings in the two towns.

Voting will be by electronic voting machine, but paper absentee ballots must also be counted after polling ends, village officials said.

If dissolution gets the majority vote, the Village Board must meet within 30 days to adopt a dissolution plan.

The plan is subject to a permissive referendum that can also be petitioned to a public vote. If that second vote were to fail, the village would not dissolve.

The Press-Republican will post referendum results from today's vote on its website, www.pressrepublican.com, as soon as they're available.

CHAMPLAIN VOTE IN MARCH

Keeseville isn't the only village considering dissolution.

Voters in the Village of Champlain will go to the polls on March 19 to decide whether dissolution should be studied.

Resident Kevin Triller circulated a petition that was presented late last year to the Village Board with enough signatures to force a public referendum on the issue.

His contention is that the village, which sits in the Town of Champlain, has lacked "prudent management," he said in December.

He said the loss of services, including the police force and Village Court, support his stand.

Others, including Mayor Gregory Martin, point to costs that villagers would pay regardless of dissolution, including the debt for the water system. And they say water and sewer rates have remained steady in recent years and don't know whether that would be maintained should the Town of Champlain take over operation of the infrastructure.

A yes vote on March 19 would mean the village has to conduct a study on the issue. Once complete, dissolution would be subject to permissive referendum, meaning a petition with enough signatures would bring the issue to public vote again.

News Editor Suzanne Moore contributed to this report.



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