

# NY Southern Tier village could dissolve

**WBFO-FM 88.7**

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By Joyce Kryszak

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Lakewood, NY – Regionalism guru Kevin Gaughan has become somewhat notorious for his efforts to dissolve villages in Western New York. He has succeeded in getting the villages of Williamsville and Sloan to put dissolution up for a vote. But the small

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Lakewood resident Christopher Colbern is a member of the Merge and Lower Taxes Committee. he said the small group started talking with the village board of Lakewood about some cost savings ideas several months ago. But he said they got nowhere. So, instead they circulated a petition asking residents to support a referendum on dissolution.

10 percent of the roughly 3,000 residents agreed. And now, the village could become history on August 25.

If approved, the village would fold into the Town of Busti. Lakewood Mayor Anthony Caprino said there is no reason for such a drastic change. He said village residents enjoy excellent services, such as police and fire protection that he said they want to keep the same.

In fact, eliminating those and most other villages services isn't even part of the consolidation plan. All that is called for is elimination of the village board, the mayor


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That is estimated at about \$40,000 a year in savings - or roughly \$16.00 a year for the average village resident.

Proponents of dissolution point to long-term savings, with a reduced workforce and management through attrition over time. But Caprino said nobody has actually crunched those numbers - or figured out the logistics.

Colbern said they are working on a sample plan that residents will be able to consider before the vote. He said the important thing for them to know is that the only thing that would really dissolve is their village tax bill.\

"There will still be signs that say welcome to Lakewood. You will have your same mailing address in Lakewood, New York. Lakewood will maintain the exact identity it has now," said Colbern. "The only thing you won't have is a village government."

If dissolved, he said Lakewood would be known as the hamlet of Lakewood, rather than the village of Lakewood.



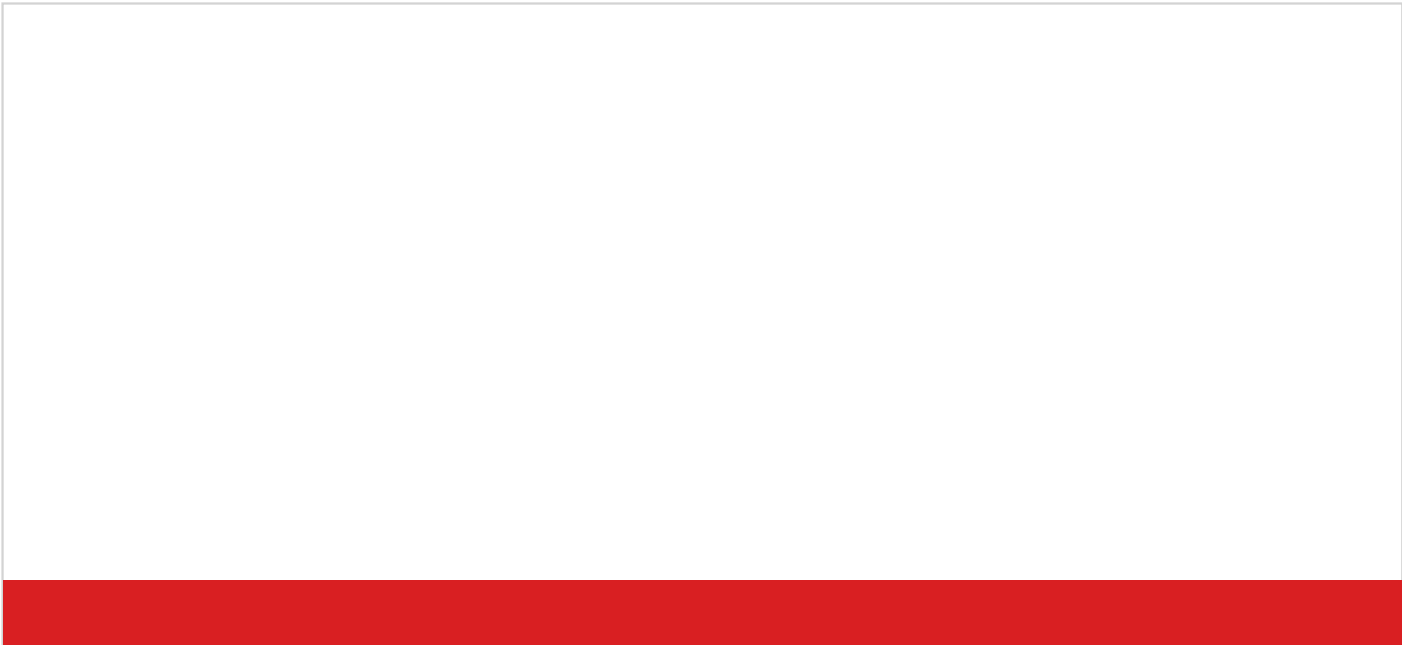
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