

A tradition of sharing services

For years a core principal of municipal government in Pittsford has been inter-governmental cooperation for the purpose of providing services as efficiently as possible, at the lowest cost.

It's an ongoing effort. Changing circumstances offer up new opportunities to share or consolidate services. It may not be possible to predict precisely what opportunities will emerge in the months or years ahead. The point is that they emerge. For this reason, Mayor Corby, School Superintendent Pero and I meet regularly to identify new opportunities for cooperation and to improve on existing shared undertakings.

Pittsford has taken the lead in creating venues for collaboration even broader than within our own community. The outstanding success in this regard has been the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust, commonly referred to as the “Health Care Consortium.” The concept of my predecessor Supervisor Bill Carpenter, who carried his idea through to implementation in 2011, the Consortium consists of Pittsford and 13 other regional municipal entities which have combined to obtain health insurance for our employees. Acting together creates a strength in numbers that in turn gives us leverage with insurers that neither we nor the other member communities would have on our own.

The numbers tell the story. The average annual health insurance premium increase to member communities since the Consortium's inception has been 6.4%. The average annual increase to non-Consortium members subject to the community rate is in double digits. For example, the 2014 premium increase for Consortium members has been 7%. The 2014 increase to non-members subject to the community rate is 15%.

Looking no further than Pittsford's own borders, Pittsford taxpayers benefit from savings realized through the following collaborative undertakings, which represent only a limited set of examples:

- Our Town and Village share services of the Fire Marshall, Animal Control Officer, Assessor's Office, Parking Enforcement and Historian's Office, to cite just some examples.
- The Town and Village share Code Enforcement services on an as-needed basis.
- The School District and the Town have an agreement whereby Town vehicles use the School District's vehicle fueling facility, thus eliminating the need for a separate fueling station.
- The Village and Town share equipment under a long-standing inter-municipal agreement, thus eliminating duplicate purchases of expensive equipment.

- The Town, Village, School District and the Pittsford Fire District are partners in an inter-municipal agreement for sharing Geographic Information Services.
- The Town and Village are parties to other agreements for cooperation and sharing of Sewer Department services and covering municipal parking arrangements.
- The Village recently turned over administration of its elections to the Monroe County Board of Elections, thereby saving the expense of conducting elections independently.

These are just some of the examples of ongoing cooperation and shared services that save Pittsford residents on the cost of government. In addition to them there are frequent “one-off” opportunities for similar collaboration. Some examples include the School District and the Village helping the Town with installation of 400 high efficiency light fixtures; the Town assisting the School District with increasing the size of the parking lot at the school bus facility; and collaboration with the village on the grant to improve the Port of Pittsford Park.

The space allowed for a weekly column does not permit me to do justice to the complete range of additional examples of intergovernmental cooperation in Pittsford to save taxpayers money. The State recently has taken steps to encourage such activities state-wide. Pittsford’s response is: “Welcome to the club!”

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please stop by my office in Town Hall, call me at 248-6220 or send a message to bsmith@townofpittsford.org. To stay abreast of Town news, you can sign up for our weekly eNews at www.townofpittsford.org.