



NYS Department of State
Albany Law School/Government Law Center
Shared Municipal Services Technical Assistance Project
Case Study Template

1. Community Identifiers

1.1 For "lead" municipality (listed first) and each participating municipality, the name and type of municipality (e.g. County of Albany; City of Schenectady; Town of Hempstead; Village of Scotia; Colonie Central School District)

<u>Participating Municipality</u>	<u>Type of Municipality</u>
Town of Rhinebeck	Town
Village of Rhinebeck	Village
Rhinebeck Central School District	School District

1.2 Most recent U.S. Census population and land area of each participating municipality;

<u>Participating Municipality</u>	<u>2000 Census Population</u>	<u>Land Area (sq. miles)</u>
Town of Rhinebeck	7,762	36.3
Village of Rhinebeck	3,077	1.6
Rhinebeck Central School District	1,245 (number of pupils)	

1.3 Fiscal metrics for each participating municipality taken from the Comptroller's local government data base for the most recent year available, including, but not limited to:

Town of Rhinebeck (2004 to 2005)

	2004	2005
Total Taxable Assessed Value of Real Property	555,503,375	570,781,746
Full Value of Real Property	835,971,971	858,964,252
Total Debt Outstanding	410,000	360,000

Total Revenues with Total State Aid

	2004	2005
Total Revenue	3,291,437	3,474,483
State Aid	613,793	688,069
Proportion of State Aid	(18.65%)	(19.80%)
General Purpose	453,413	493,373
Health	0	0
Highway & Transportation	102,182	151,011
Social Services	0	0
Other	58,198	43,685

Total Expenditures with Total Debt Service

	2004	2005
Total Expenditures	3,324,213	3,310,439
Total Debt Service	36,257	56,010
Principal	30,000	50,000
Interest	6,257	6,010

Total Expenditures by Function

	2004	2005
Central Government	688,016	642,972
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	380,993	388,631
Contractual Services	155,634	168,995
Equipment and Capital Outlay	151,389	85,346
Education	0	0
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0	0
Contractual Services	0	0
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0
Police	31,761	59,144
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0	0
Contractual Services	31,761	59,144
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0
Fire	158,010	165,626
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0	0
Contractual Services	158,010	165,626
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0
Other Public Safety	75,557	86,447
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	59,476	74,914
Contractual Services	16,081	11,533
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0
Health	1,522	1,698
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	1,381	1,698
Contractual Services	141	0
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0
Transportation	1,331,713	1,122,168
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	505,143	607,321
Contractual Services	254,543	352,052
Equipment and Capital Outlay	572,027	162,795
Economic Assistance	14,840	16,840
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0	0
Contractual Services	14,840	16,840
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0

Culture-Recreation	451,500	541,253
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	155,266	162,103
Contractual Services	238,012	261,035
Equipment and Capital Outlay	58,222	118,115
Home and Community Services	535,038	618,282
Utilities	82,687	181,369
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	1,835	1,606
Contractual Services	80,852	179,763
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0	0
Other Community Services	452,351	436,913
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	201,059	240,262
Contractual Services	174,839	186,432
Equipment and Capital Outlay	76,453	10,219

Village of Rhinebeck (2004)

	2004
Total Taxable Assessed Value of Real Property	159,980,253
Full Value of Real Property	213,307,004
Total Debt Outstanding	4,011,700

Total Revenues with Total State Aid

	2004
Total Revenue	2,962,559
State Aid	149,672
Proportion of State Aid	(5.05%)
General Purpose	81,455
Health	0
Highway & Transportation	62,075
Social Services	0
Other	6,142

Total Expenditures with Total Debt Service

	2004
Total Expenditures	2,990,033
Total Debt Service	513,524
Principal	375,266
Interest	138,258

Total Expenditures by Function

	2004
Central Government	434,777
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	203,887
Contractual Services	191,321
Equipment and Capital Outlay	39,569
Education	0
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0
Contractual Services	0
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
Police	191,752
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	167,656
Contractual Services	22,186
Equipment and Capital Outlay	1,910
Fire	175,013
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0
Contractual Services	85,886
Equipment and Capital Outlay	89,127
Other Public Safety	7,005
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	6,940
Contractual Services	65
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
Health	627
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	627
Contractual Services	0
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
Transportation	490,661
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	256,317
Contractual Services	232,965
Equipment and Capital Outlay	1,379
Economic Assistance	0
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	0
Contractual Services	0
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
Culture-Recreation	20,662
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	12,369
Contractual Services	8,293
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
Home and Community Services	1,156,017
Utilities	932,994

Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	463,095
Contractual Services	349,355
Equipment and Capital Outlay	120,544
Other Community Services	223,023
Personal Services and Allocated Fringes	107,225
Contractual Services	115,798
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0

Rhinebeck (School District Data: 2004)

	2004
Total Taxable Assessed Value of Real Property	790,087,078
Full Value of Real Property	1,105,697,233
Total Debt Outstanding	4,383,053
Total Tax Levy	15,157,732
Total Tax Levy as a Percentage	1.37%

Total Revenues with Total State Aid

	2004
Total Revenue	18,991,912
State Aid	2,618,811
Proportion of State Aid	(13.79%)

Total Expenditures with Total Debt Service

	2004
Total Expenditures	18,514,698
Total Debt Service	612,425
Principal	391,142
Interest	221,283

Total Expenditures by Function

	2004
General Support	1,403,481
Current Operations	1,252,567
Equipment and Capital Outlay	150,914
Operating and Maintenance of Facility	1,323,561
Current Operations	1,211,043
Equipment and Capital Outlay	112,518
Instruction Administration	1,481,537
Current Operations	1,460,672
Equipment and Capital Outlay	20,865

Teaching	11,289,800
Current Operations	11,244,285
Equipment and Capital Outlay	45,515
School Lunch, Store	240,996
Current Operations	240,996
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
Pupil, Personnel Services	843,486
Current Operations	841,777
Equipment and Capital Outlay	1,709
PUPIL ACTIVITY	286,826
Current Operations	283,967
Equipment and Capital Outlay	2,859
TRANSPORT OF PUPILS	1,032,189
Current Operations	1,032,189
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0
COMMUNITY SERVICES	395
Current Operations	395
Equipment and Capital Outlay	0

1.4 People involved in the case study should be identified and interviewed. This should include, but not be limited to the chief elected official of the municipalities involved, department heads and appropriate employees, municipal attorneys or attorneys hired by the municipality(s), other local officials, representatives from advocacy groups and the media, and others who may have played a critical role. (Please include their contact information in Appendix A).

Kathy Kinsella, Director of Rhinebeck Highway Department, 845-876-6263
Joe Phelan, Rhinebeck School Superintendent, 845-871-5520 ext. 5522
Richard Cunningham, Mayor – Village of Rhinebeck, 845-876-7015
Peter Sipperly, Village Mayor, 1991
Bob McGuire, former fire chief, 1991
Steven Block, Rhinebeck Town Supervisor, 845-876-3409 E-mail:sgblock@aol.com.
William Dowden III, chair of the 1991 Ad Hoc Committee
William Dowden IV
Ellen Silverstein
Warren Replansky, Town Attorney

1.5 Outside agencies or individuals that provided technical assistance help should also be identified, and if appropriate, contacted to ascertain the nature and extent of assistance rendered. (Please include their contact information in Appendix A).

The Rhinebeck Collaboration hired a grant writer from Shingebiss Associates to assemble the SMSI proposal.

2. Background on the Issue Addressed

2.1 Provide a clear description of the issue being addressed, and the where the impetus for the project came from. Include, if available, community discussion from newspaper articles, letters to the editor, correspondence with elected officials, etc

This study deals with two efforts, separated by a 15-year span, to explore intermunicipal cooperation among jurisdictions in Rhinebeck, New York. The two efforts developed in 1991 and 2006. The 1991 initiative involved discussions between the town and village of Rhinebeck, and in 2006, discussions included both municipalities and the Rhinebeck Central School District.

The town and village formed an ad hoc cooperation committee in 1991 as the public face of its initiative. The committee spent nine months exploring options and produced a report late in 1991 that might have served as a foundation for continuing talks. When the report became public, village officials rejected the findings, halting further efforts.

In 2006, the Town, Village, and School District of Rhinebeck engaged in conversations and meetings to revive their prospects for cooperation, with several promising outcomes. First, the three officials formed a discussion group called the Rhinebeck Collaboration. Second, the three jurisdictions formed a conference committee and held a conference on cooperation with residents in November 2006. Third, the town and school district developed and adopted an agreement on sharing facilities. And fourth, the jurisdictions crafted a Shared Municipal Services Initiative (SMSI) proposal to fund feasibility studies on select areas where cooperative agreements seemed likely and worthwhile. Though the current Rhinebeck initiatives are still fairly new, the prospects for continued progress are good.

This study explores each effort on its own merits. An objective of this work is to try to understand the dynamics in 1991 that undermined the cooperative effort and those in 2006 that sustain it. The 15-year gap between the communities' attempts to find common ground for cooperation presented one clear challenge. There are far fewer residents and key players from the 1991 era available for interviews, and documentation from the effort is minimal. Fortunately, key individuals who participated in interviews, arrayed on opposing sides of the dispute that arose, conveyed a similar view of events. The authors feel that the report contains a fair treatment of the 1991 events on the essentials of the case.

Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee: The 1991 Initiative

In 1991 the town and village formed a working group called the Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee. The committee formed five subcommittees to explore prospects for cooperation. The subgroups included Administration and Management, Courts and Public Safety, Land Use and Planning, Public Works, Water and Sewage, and Recreation. In the report issued by the full committee, the members embraced the principle of integrating similar town and village operations in common, and reducing duplicative areas of service delivery, writing:

“The Town of Rhinebeck and the Village of Rhinebeck share a common historical heritage, a common location, and a common concern about the future quality of life for their citizens. Yet, due to a variety of factors, separate governments exist for the Town and the Village. This dual governance of a town and village, where the village is physically surrounded by the town, can lead to an inefficient duplication of services. This was recognized by the Town and Village Boards when they created the Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee.”

The committee began meeting in March 1991 and submitted their report in late October or early November. Their charge was to examine the operations of the town and village governments and determine where future cooperative investments could create savings and more effective use of resources. The introduction to the report stated, “While consolidation was not the charge of this Committee, serious consideration should be given to integrating and merging both governments to a greater extent. It is our hope this report will serve as a beginning and stimulate thoughts in that regard.” Shortly after the report was made public, the village mayor, Peter Sipperly, prepared an openly critical

letter disparaging the findings on several grounds. The village withdrew from further participation thereafter.

Rhinebeck Collaboration 2006

Residents of the Town of Rhinebeck elected Steven Block as supervisor in November 2005. Block brought a background in community activism and experience in education to his current role. When interviewed, Supervisor Block indicated that he is comfortable in collaborative environments and finds active and engaged citizens to be a community asset. To that end, since taking office the supervisor established nine new governing entities in the town.

Before the start of his administration, Block began to explore the existing relationships between the town and village and the town and school district. He found chilled relationships between the town and school district and pockets of collaboration with the village, but no cooperative agenda in place.

After taking office Block worked with the village and school district, and with the staff, board members, and citizens who came to the table from each jurisdiction, to form agreements and work groups focused on cooperative exploration. In the early days of 2006 the Rhinebeck Collaboration and the Rhinebeck conference planning committee were established, and by mid-year an IMA between the town and school district was approved.

Cooperation Milestones

The three jurisdictions made considerable progress in the months before the Rhinebeck Cooperation Conference took place. Those milestones are outlined briefly.

Prior to 2006, the Town of Rhinebeck and the Rhinebeck School District charged each other for use of their respective facilities. When the schools needed to use a town field, the town charged the district \$1,000. When the town used a school gym for an elementary basketball program, the district charged the town. Such signs of detachment and formality between the jurisdictions troubled the supervisor. Supervisor Block began conversations with the district superintendent, developed trust, and together they were able to change that practice. In August of 2006 the two jurisdictions, authorized by their respective boards, signed an IMA offering the other no-cost use of their respective facilities. The agreement does not change existing insurance liability distribution, as each host continues to bear the obligation of insuring its facilities no matter the use or user.

Supervisor Block was apprised of the history existing between the village and town and felt that circumstances warranted a renewed attempt at collaboration between the municipalities. The two governments had standing agreements around recreation services and some highway operations, and their citizens, many of whom were residents of both entities, were sophisticated organizers with goodwill among them and many initiatives to their credit.

Within a short time after taking office, Supervisor Block reached agreement with Mayor Carol Mielich of the Village of Rhinebeck, and Superintendent Joseph Phelan of the Rhinebeck School District on forming the Rhinebeck Collaboration. The group of three leaders and a member from each jurisdiction's board began conversations to formalize collaboration. As early as January 2006, the Rhinebeck town board passed a resolution to authorize the supervisor to form and participate in the group on behalf of the town. At the same meeting, the board selected a member who would participate in the Rhinebeck Collaboration and approved a resolution authorizing the formation of a community-wide ad hoc committee. The village followed in March 2006 with a similar resolution, as did the school district. The Conference Planning Committee, comprised of members from the three Rhinebeck jurisdictions, was tasked with planning a conference on cooperation later in 2006.

The conference took place on November 18, 2006 under the heading, "Can We Improve How Our Schools, Town, & Village Work Together?" The daylong event drew 85 residents and featured experts in planning, law, regional history, and policy. Participants spent the morning in presentation and discussion sessions with experts and officials, and the afternoon in work groups to build an agenda of proposed long and short-term changes it wanted to support. At present, the draft document containing the proposed

agenda has not been released. However, the arrangements in place are that the conference planning committee will review and revise the plan and when ready, submit the draft to the Rhinebeck Collaboration. The Collaboration members will review and selectively revise the proposal and maintain a dialogue with the committee. Once consensus is achieved between the two groups, each governing body (i.e., the seven member school board, and the five member village and town boards) will consider the agenda for adoption, in whole or in part.

Just prior to conference, in late October, the municipalities took advantage of the opportunity presented by the 2006-07 round of SMSI funds to submit a proposal for joint feasibility studies. The \$134,500 request, to be matched with a \$14,950 local share, was to be used to fund studies of economic and operational feasibility around the general areas defined by the conference work groups.

2.2 *What is the legal foundation? Were there any lawsuits involved in the issue being addressed, local resolutions passed or intergovernmental agreements entered into? (Copies of all legal documents should be obtained and listed on Appendix B – List of Legal Documents)*

There is broad authority throughout the New York State legal framework allowing for municipal corporations and districts to cooperate with one another. Local governments may jointly provide any municipal facility, service, activity, or other undertaking as long as each unit has the power to provide such service separately. (General Municipal Law Art. 5-6, §§ 119m – 119-ooo). Article 5-G specifically stipulates the grant of statutory authority is only for two municipalities already possessing authority to provide a service to enter into an agreement to do so collaboratively. In other words, the governmental unit must have the power to provide any such service separately before it can enter into a municipal agreement.

Certain sections of State law were particularly relevant to the service areas examined by the town and village in the previous and current periods:

- General Municipal Law §§ 97, 122-b, 209, 209-a, and 209-s, regarding emergency fire, police and ambulance services.
- Executive Law § 226 gives the authority for a town or village to contract with the state police.
- Regarding the collaboration of Highway services, see Highway Law §§ 133-a, 135-a, 142-b, 142-c, 142-d, and General Municipal Law §72-j.
- For cooperation in the area of recreational facilities, refer to General Municipal Law §§ 244-b, 244-d, and 212-a.
- For collaboration of water and sewer services, refer to General Municipal Law §99-f and 120-t.
- See General Municipal Law Article 12-C for the formation of Intergovernmental Relations Councils.
- The authority of school districts to participate in intergovernmental agreements is granted through the General Municipal Law, article 5-G § 119-n.

2.3 *What were the arguments raised, both pro and con, in discussing the issue? Specifically look for policy, legal, fiscal, collective bargaining, political and emotional issues. Also, were there differences in organizational culture at play?*

Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee: The 1991 initiative

The 1991 initiative focused on cost savings. According to respondents, the town initiated and drove the process forward. The primary themes were economic and political. The committee stated, and can be presumed to have believed, that two governments covering the same geographic territory produce some inefficiency. The committee members explored and identified some options for saving money by combining resources or integrating functions. As such, the report focused on very specific actions to save money. For example, the report suggested combining town, village, and school district purchasing for

some materials and jointly using mail presorting to save four cents on each piece of mail. The report also suggested more substantial areas for savings around potential courts merger and public security restructuring.

The letter from Mayor Sipperly, in response to the report, effectively tabled any further formal cooperative steps. He detailed his opposition and explained the report did not provide evidence that the village would save money and contained several suggestions that represent revenue losses for the village. Moreover, the mayor stated that the process followed by the ad hoc committee was flawed. Specifically, he asserted that several persons with expertise from the fire districts and village departments were left out of the consultation and interview process.

Rhinebeck Collaboration 2006

There seem to be few arguments raised against the cooperation dialogue that began in 2006, but there are clear hurdles to some of the options under review. The issues are diffused across fiscal, legal, policy, collective bargaining, political, and emotional themes.

As in 1991, town residents and officials may perceive somewhat greater potential for efficiencies, and more opportunities for significant change, than their village counterparts. The current village mayor, Richard Cunningham, explained in an interview that it makes sense for the village to collaborate; it does not need its entire infrastructure. As an example he noted that the jurisdictions could fairly easily merge “back room” facilities, where the court clerks work. However, their respective staff would have to multi-task and realize the functional differences between the two entities. Also, he noted some difficulty in certain areas of proposed integration because village and town laws are different in some respects. Mayor Cunningham and former Mayor Sipperly each explained that there are collective bargaining challenges associated with merging town and village departments, as the employees in each jurisdiction are members of different unions.

There are policy issues pertaining to some services. The town highway department performs only road maintenance and snow removal, while the village offers other services, such as brush pick-up and mulching. It is unlikely that villagers would be interested in giving up these services.

There are also serious political and structural differences in the way the municipalities operate their fire departments. The Rhinebeck Village Board of Trustees is responsible for the village fire department. In the town, a separate fire district governs each fire company. The town fire departments also have a manpower problem, especially in the daytime. In sum, some officials did not seem to think that integration of most services offered by the town and village would be easy or possible.

Finally, the current mayor and others interviewed explained there is also an emotional component. Villages offer culture and history, and one of the key elements of the Village of Rhinebeck is its historic nature. People are afraid the village will lose its character if it is eventually merged with the town, that its uniqueness will be lost, perhaps because of different town zoning rules.

2.4 Did the local news organizations (print, broadcast) take a position editorially? If so what was the position; and if not, why not?

The *Poughkeepsie Journal* and the *Daily Freeman*, the two nearby newspapers, are small and therefore are not indexed by the newspaper or the major databases, such as Lexis/Nexis. Spotty searches can be performed for news articles on the newspapers' websites. We found nothing on the November 18, 2006, conference or the SMSI grant submission. We contacted an outside news indexing service to perform a search. The results going back to 1995 only revealed a handful of articles pertaining to consolidation, cooperation, or cost savings initiatives, and nothing specifically on the November 18, 2006, conference or the SMSI grant submission.

3. The Proposal to Address the Issue

3.1 Describe the specific proposal(s):

a. Was the proposal adopted?

The village tabled any further action on the specific steps outlined the in the 1991 Ad Hoc Committee report.

The Rhinebeck Collaboration, the current initiative, is still early in the process of consideration. We began investigating this case less than six weeks after the November 18, 2006, conference, and completed the study before the notes from the conference were submitted to the Rhinebeck Collaboration. In addition, the municipalities submitted a SMSI proposal based on topics to be explored at the November 2006 conference, but have not been notified of the proposal's status.

b. Was it modified or amended prior to adoption? If yes, how was it changed?

The village blocked the 1991 initiative from further progress after it reviewed the report issued by the Ad Hoc Committee and found it wholly unsatisfactory.

With the Rhinebeck Collaboration in 2006, the November 18 conference generated initial ideas for specific actions that were incorporated into the SMSI grant submission requesting funding for a feasibility study. When we interviewed the supervisor, he explained their next steps: when draft minutes of meeting are ready, the conference committee will vet the document and develop an agenda of proposed long and short term of changes it wants to support. Then the conference planning committee will meet with the Rhinebeck Collaboration members and review the proposal. The proposal will likely be amended several times in the near future.

c. If the proposal was rejected, explain the reasons why.

The village rejected the proposed actions outlined in the 1991 report primarily because it did not perceive any financial benefit from the significant proposals and because it felt the town, who led the process, performed an inadequate job surveying knowledgeable officials to obtain balanced perspective and accurate facts.

None of the responsible parties have rejected the proposed next steps resulting from the November 18, 2006 conference, but the current and former mayors expressed doubts on the extent of possible achievement on significant integration of functions or departments (See section 2.3 for more detail).

d. How was the proposal to be funded?

Each of the cost savings steps proposed in 1991 and 2006/2007 were/are self-funding to the extent they were/are conceived to save operating costs. The November 18, 2006, conference was sponsored by a grant from the Thompson Foundation and the municipalities submitted an SMSI grant requesting assistance for a \$134,550 feasibility study to assess the proposed cost-saving actions emerging from the conference.

e. Who was responsible for its implementation?

The proposed steps resulting from the 1991 report and November 18, 2006, conference range across many functional areas of service delivery. Many parties would be responsible for their implementation. Ultimately legal and political responsibility lies with elected officials, the village mayor and town

supervisor, their respective boards, and any other directly elected department officials, such as the town highway department superintendent. The primary agent(s) leading or driving the initiatives bear a disproportionate obligation for ensuring implementation proceeds in a coordinated and coherent fashion.

3.2 Describe who was in favor of the proposal and why.

Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee: The 1991 initiative

There are few documents from the 1991 initiative, with the exception of the committee's report and Mayor Sipperly's letter to the public. As a result, details of discussions and meetings during the months in which the committee collected data and presented their report are sparse. The research relied on interviews with individuals who participated in the effort to try to understand how the process unfolded and why it failed.

Initially, the leaders and residents of both municipalities were supportive of the cooperation effort. Each municipality agreed to allow the committee to investigate all aspects of the village and town government, have unfettered access to records, budgets, and expenditure data, and to interview staff and department heads. Such openness suggests that a healthy level of interest, trust, and commitment to exploring options existed at the outset. There is some indication that the boards of each jurisdiction anticipated small but steady growth as a result of their proximity to New York City, and wanted to be prepared to address the pressures that growth would place on taxes, land use, and services. Realigning for efficiencies and joint planning in some key areas seemed like a worthy step to take.

Following the issue of the report, the town leaders and committee members remained committed to the pursuit of service efficiencies with the village. Those we spoke with noted that there were enough options within reach to have had some small successes in 1991. They hoped that those small successes would build new habits and perspectives among the residents and officials of the two jurisdictions, making it possible to work on the harder issues over time.

Rhinebeck Collaboration 2006

The leaders of each jurisdiction in Rhinebeck supported the Rhinebeck Collaboration and the conference on cooperation. All three jurisdictions collaborated on the SMSI proposal and have taken legal steps to formalize their cooperative efforts and achievements. The three leaders identified similar reasons for joining forces: their shared geography and heritage, and a set of common pressures. These pressures include increasing taxes, demands for the provision of services, and growth demands. Moreover, the leaders, residents, and officials appreciate cooperation as a tool of good government and understand the latent value of their communities' record of cooperation.

3.3 Describe who was opposed to the proposal and why.

Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee: The 1991 initiative

Officials in the Village of Rhinebeck opposed the 1991 report when it was issued. In a letter dated November 15, 1991, Peter Sipperly, mayor of the village at the time, outlined the concerns of the village. In a recent interview he explained that the board was livid with the results of the report. Village officials felt that the wrong people were appointed to the wrong subcommittees when the committee's began its work in March of 1991, resulting in less than satisfactory results.

Village officials were unconvinced that there were any savings to be had in the proposed service consolidations and objected to recommendations that would have resulted in revenue losses. Several important functions, such as police and fire services, were given a more detailed review in the report. In one section, the mayor indicated that the subcommittee suggested that the jurisdictions should consider using Sheriff's Deputies for public safety rather than the village police staff. The Mayor responded that the deputies were paid at more than twice the rate as local part-time police officers, hardly a savings for the village.

It was not possible to determine the context in which the villagers reviewed the report in 1991, nor the exchanges between individuals as they debated the process and the report itself. However, it should be noted that the report did not recommend any changes to the arrangements in place, stating that each municipality carefully scrutinizes their expenditures for police operations. The report further states that police operations in each municipality are provided in a cost effective and efficient manner. The recommendations section on police services suggests continued research on the costs and benefits of each system for police, but stated, "under their present modes of operation, it does not seem possible to merge Town and Village police protection services." In this matter, there is certainly a discrepancy between the villagers' perceptions of the report recommendations and the report contents.

The committee report recommended that the town and village courts "work toward consolidation of its courts". The mayor explained in his letter that a merger of the court system did not make sense from the village's perspective because the lost income would not be offset by the decreased cost of operations.

Mayor Sipperly also explained that the process was insufficient because his inquiries indicated that few village officials had been part of the committee's interview process, and those that had been interviewed discussed subjects unrelated to their area of expertise. He noted, "Interviews with village officials and employees were next to nothing. The village board was interviewed only to explain the function of village government." In reviewing the report's suggestion of consolidating the three fire departments (two volunteer departments in the town and one in the village) the Mayor observed that the relevant subcommittee spoke to only one individual. The report prompted a political response. The village felt slighted in the process and discovered no worthwhile cost savings opportunities from the results of the committee's investigation. In his public letter, the mayor put it this way: "The theme of the report seemed to be 'to hell with the village, lets [sic] benefit the town.'"

Interviews with individuals with diverse opinions on the 1991 proposal were consistent in their view that villagers detected a political undertone in the initiative. Many villagers thought that the town's involvement was self-interested. The village had resources that might have been shared or folded into a restructuring deal if cooperative agreements had gone forward, and it had a thriving business district that villagers wanted to preserve. The perspective of some town residents interviewed for the study, who also participated in the process in 1991, was that the village rejection of the report was similarly self-interested in that it seemed the village merely wanted to withhold its assets.

The town and village did not agree on the extent of the changes proposed. Several residents indicated that there was a line that could not be crossed from the villager's perspective; they were willing to consider consolidation of certain services, but were resistant to more extensive jurisdictional blurring of the town and village. Members of the town, in contrast, appeared to be comfortable with changes that edged the municipalities in the direction of consolidation of governments. Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee report admitted: "While consolidation was not the charge of this Committee, serious consideration should be given to integrating and merging both governments to a greater extent."

The mayor added in an interview that before the committee was formed and the report was issued, the village and the town used to have informal meetings to discuss services areas in which collaboration could be nurtured. There was no formal contract; the town and village just provided mutual assistance. They helped each other with snow pick up at no charge and with no contract. They also loaned each other equipment, such as back hoes, trucks etc. Also, the town loaned the village equipment to help in the lake clean-up project the village initiated. The political fallout resulting from the Committee's report did not seriously affect this informal collaboration.

Rhinebeck Collaboration 2006

No significant opposition to the Rhinebeck Collaboration was detected through interviews or in editorials or news articles. While interviewees posed questions about the difficulties that lie ahead, the communities appeared to be poised to move forward. One potential obstacle noted was the capacity of the conference attendees to build a useful cooperation agenda. The primary concern is about the breadth of expertise that may be needed across several very different functions in order to make useful

recommendations. One official felt that most people are not well versed in the specifics of government operations. Several people we interviewed indicated that the conference might have produced an information overload and that delays in issuance of the report to date may be such an indication.

With respect to difficulties ahead, the current village mayor, Richard Cunningham, indicated that there are union and collective bargaining issues that may prove difficult. He commented that public officials should initiate public action to sustain the quality of life and improve it for future generations, not for personal agendas. There are lingering concerns among villagers that some town residents are motivated by an interest in dissolving the village.

3.4 *Summarize the policy, legal, fiscal, collective bargaining, political and emotional results expected from adoption of the proposal. Were changes expected in organizational culture?*

The village rejected the 1991 initiative after reviewing the report issued by the Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee. The emotional results of the process were that the village appeared to be annoyed with the town, disabling any further concentrated efforts toward collaboration or consolidation until recently. Fortunately, it does not appear that there were insurmountable or lasting hostilities.

The current initiative carries a number of possible policy, legal, fiscal, collective bargaining, political, and emotional results depending on the extent of cooperation, collaboration, and/or integration agreed to by the Town, Village, and School District Boards. Different areas of service delivery in which the three entities might pursue specific actions to achieve cost savings each require negotiation according to their own, unique set of circumstances. For example, actions involving employees of the town and village highway departments often raise labor, or collective bargaining, issues; dissolving a police department raises the legal issue of a permissive referendum. Details of some of the parameters of specific areas of service delivery up for consideration in the current initiative are outlined in greater detail in Section 2.3.

3.5 *Describe what steps were taken, and what agreements were reached, to be able to measure results of enacting the proposal against the expectations.*

We did not discover any efforts or approaches to estimating or projecting measurable cost savings results for the current initiative. The current initiative is still in the early stage, just past initial conception but still in planning mode. Specific actions to integrate functions or services have yet to be agreed upon or implemented. The merit of the numerous specifically proposed actions outlined in the SMSI grant application for assistance funding a feasibility study will be demonstrated if the grant is approved. Future steps are outline in Section 4.1.

4. What Was Actually Done

4.1 *Describe if the proposal(s) was adopted, modified (how) and then adopted, or rejected.*

The village board blocked the 1991 initiative from further progress primarily because it perceived no fiscal benefit to the village. The current initiative is still in the early stage, just past initial conception but still in planning mode. Specific actions to integrate functions or services have yet to be agreed upon or implemented. Critical future decision-making stages include:

- 1 Conference committee acceptance of the summary
- 2 Conference committee agreement on an agenda from the summary
- 3 Rhinebeck collaboration group acceptance of the agenda

- 4 Each of the three governing boards embraces or adopts the agenda
- 5 Each proposed action or set of actions would be incorporated into one or more proposed intermunicipal agreements.
- 6 Feasibility analysis will be performed if SMSI grant application approved

4.2 *Obtain copies, and describe any local resolutions, contracts, shared service agreements, memoranda and any other legal actions that may have been taken. (List these documents on Appendix B – List of Legal Documents)*

The municipalities submitted an SMSI grant application requesting assistance for a \$150,000 feasibility study to further assess the proposed cost-saving actions emerging from the November 18, 2006, conference.

The school district and the town also signed an intermunicipal agreement to permit shared-use of facilities rather than billing each other for each usage.

4.3 *Provide an analysis of how the proposal's implementation results stacked up against the expectations. If the proposal has not been in operation long enough to determine outcomes, provide the set of expectations and the progress to date in meeting the expectations.*

The village tabled any further action on the specific actions outlined in the 1991 Ad Hoc Committee report and implementation of none of the proposed actions occurred. The current initiative is still early in the planning process. We began investigating this case less than six weeks after the November 18, 2006, conference, before the notes from the conference were prepared. Implementation results could be assessed by a number of measures, including the award of the SMSI grant, the extent to which the plan proceeds according to the stages outlined in Section 4.1, the number of intermunicipal agreements signed, the number of specific proposed and adopted actions leading to increased operational integration, the anticipated and actual total dollar savings resulting from the adoption of specific actions, and the anticipated and actual effect on property tax rates resulting from the adoption of specific actions, including the offsetting of possible future tax rate increases. We did not uncover any evidence that any of these specific measures were under consideration by municipal leaders.

4.4 *Meet with one or more of the municipal attorneys involved in the drafting of documents described in #2 above to develop the legal "checklist" for this type of case.*

5. Summarize the Lessons Learned

5.1 *Identify and discuss what the factors were that contributed to the ultimate success or failure of the project. Of particular importance are any impediments that were identified, and how they were overcome.*

Ad Hoc Town and Village Cooperation Committee: The 1991 initiative

The village rejected the ad hoc committee's report and the cost savings options proposed. Officials disagreed with the accuracy of the projections, and therefore, the extent of the cost savings. Concerns about the methods employed in outlining options and the scope of the recommendations were identified as contributing causes for the village's opposition. It became clear, through interviews and available documents, that villagers harbored the fear that the town was principally motivated by a desire to consolidate the jurisdictions. While the village had some faith in the process initially, certainly sufficient to give the ad hoc committee wide latitude, it appears to have been a tenuous trust. Analysis suggests that

four factors contributed to the failure of the cooperative effort:

- 1 The assets and circumstances of the jurisdictions were sufficiently different that it was difficult to balance benefits and costs
- 2 An uneven distribution of activists across the jurisdictions left the minority feeling vulnerable
- 3 Highlighted options crossed the readiness threshold of the partnership
- 4 Opponents conflated means and motivations, which derailed the process

Disparate assets and circumstances. Although the town and village of Rhinebeck were sought-after destinations in 1991 as they are today, it is the village that has the historic assets, the quaint business district, and the desirable neighborhoods. The village expended its resources to preserve its character and to provide special services that residents prize. The municipality afforded these expenditures through careful management of resources, clearly mindful of the need to keep taxes at reasonable levels. Villagers worried that proposed initiatives would detract from its appeal, either through changes to existing zoning guidelines, changes in the size or character of the business district, or by a reduction in services or the means to pay for them.

When the recommendations in the committee's report were made public, most service or operational areas mentioned were seen as threatening either the cultural and historic character of the community, or the village's ability to finance its operations. Items that saved money for the town were determined to have minimal effect on village expenditures, or a negative effect on revenues or character. It would have been difficult, given the relative differences in material and aesthetic assets of the town and village, to find cooperative service options that balanced the costs and the benefits perceived by each jurisdiction. Disparate assets made the stakes very high for the village.

Uneven distribution of activists. According to individuals interviewed, town officials were stronger advocates for the cooperative process and the ad hoc committee, and a majority of the participating citizens resided in the town. The imbalance in the number of individuals allied with the 'other' side aggravated the anxieties of villagers over the issue of town-village consolidation and any actions that seemed to lead in that direction.

Highlighted options crossed the readiness threshold. The ambitious portfolio of ideas and recommendations highlighted by the ad hoc committee exceeded the parameters of the partnership in terms of its readiness and expert capacity. It is difficult to know how the municipalities laid the groundwork for this cooperative effort; memory about steps taken in 1991 has deteriorated over time. The two jurisdictions had many informal cooperative activities, sharing equipment and storage facilities and a few more formal interactions, which may have been the basis for discussion. Whatever occurred, both municipalities were willing to give the ad hoc committee access and latitude in preparing their proposal, signaling a greater degree of partnership than might be explained by casual cooperation. The report was couched in terms respectful of each municipality's autonomy and separate interests, but delved into some of the most sensitive areas of local control: revenues, planning, and public safety. There were also issues raised related to the committee structure and whether it provided its members with the right level of expertise for their search. The village was not ready to negotiate such matters, and trust between the jurisdictions evaporated.

Conflated means and motivations. Apprehension of a base motive on the part of the town (to dissolve the village) in pursuing the cooperation agenda shadowed the process and the notion remained close to the surface for many villagers. It is plausible that any clumsiness in the report, factual error, or indication that the committee had moved beyond its expertise would drive village residents to conflate methods and motives of the town, and trigger a rejection of the proposal. This in fact happened, and was detailed in the reasoning provided by Mayor Sipperly. The fact that the committee delved into sensitive areas, though they were certainly empowered to do so, may have been a tactical error on the part of the process planners. The partnership had not developed the trust, or achieved the small successes necessary to building that trust, prior to taking these larger steps. The assets that the village held and sought to protect made the stakes too high for such comprehensive changes.

Rhinebeck Collaboration 2006

The success thus far in the current initiative appears to be driven by the energy and commitment of the current leaders, and a growing trust among the communities. The Rhinebeck Collaboration continues along a path of cooperation, distinguished by gradual but sustained achievements, consistent engagement and dialogue, inclusion, and acts of fairness and good sense.

Leaders of each jurisdiction articulated the need to restructure local government service delivery systems, grounded in awareness that local governments must be adaptive and creative if they are to maintain fiscal solvency. Their collective energy and drive lead the municipalities to seek and obtain foundation funding for the conference and prepare an SMSI matching-funds grant application. Even anticipating the possible rejection of the SMSI application, administrators appear undeterred and look forward to their collective next steps. The leadership will be tested in the coming months to maintain previous energy levels and continue building coherency in vision and action. Our analysis of the case suggests that there are four factors contributing to the current success of the Rhinebeck Collaboration:

- 1 Partners build trust with acts of fairness and good sense
- 2 Leaders effectively bridge their executive level partnership to legislative bodies and residents
- 3 The collaboration commemorates its achievement with action
- 4 Partners recognize that the pace of ambition cannot outstrip knowledge and capacity

Build trust with acts of fairness and good sense. Leaders of the three jurisdictions wasted no time in taking concrete action to demonstrate their commitment to healthy, purposive relationships. Some of the earliest actions were not about saving money but about putting their relationships on a common sense footing. For instance, the town and school district remedied a standing practice to bill one another for the use of their respective facilities. This ended a practice that had never been about the bottom line but about the separateness of the two entities, since the charges usually cancelled each other out. Their actions signaled a new era of good will. The town and village recently partnered to buy land adjacent to the local library, covering a large portion of the purchase price with funds the town received from the county. The agreement benefits the residents of both jurisdictions, makes sense, and signals that cooperation is doable. These tactics build a reservoir of ordinary trust that can be the bedrock for bigger projects, and helps remove the taint of jurisdictional consolidation that has bedeviled past efforts to collaborate.

Bridge the partnership back home. With each cooperative step, leaders of the town, village, and school district carefully draw their governing bodies and stakeholders forward, bridging information, ideas, and options across the boundaries of each group. The Rhinebeck Collaboration has six members—the 3 leaders and a member of each board. The six meet monthly and ‘talk turkey,’ then convey their deliberations to their respective boards and residents. The Rhinebeck conference planning committee—the group of residents drawn from the town and village to propose an agenda of cooperative projects—conducts its work in segments that cycle the group back to the table with the 6-member Rhinebeck Collaboration at specific milestones. These practices help decision makers test the value and robustness of their ideas and build support for shared goals. These bridging actions bring an appropriate level of transparency to the collaboration activities and signal a commitment to inclusiveness and openness to the broader community. Moreover, the deliberate interactions among the governing bodies help each group make necessary internal adjustments to new ideas and new ways of doing business in a gradual manner.

Commemorate achievements with action. The individuals that sustain the collaborative efforts in Rhinebeck are careful to commemorate their accomplishments in actions that include formal-legal processes and new project initiatives. Each gentlemen’s agreement quickly achieved legal standing through resolutions of the three governing boards. The themes that were the focus of the cooperation conference have been given status through the joint submission for SMSI funding.

Keep the pace of ambitions tied to capacity. The activists in Rhinebeck understand that they need to pause and acquire additional knowledge. As the residents found in 1991, even accomplished citizens have limits to their expertise in general government operations and the technical dimensions of certain functions. It does not pay to get ahead of your expertise; the price of bad policy, poor purchases, and

losing the trust of those depending on your judgment is very high. The SMSI proposal submitted by the Rhinebeck group seeks expert help in conducting feasibility studies related to emerging proposals and signals their commitment to knowledge-driven choices.

5.2 *Discuss the expectations for results. How long until measurable results would be achieved?*

The current initiative is still early in the planning process. We began investigating this case less than six weeks after the November 18, 2006, conference, before the notes from the conference were prepared. (The town and the school district signed an intermunicipal agreement to share facilities. The immediate cost savings result is negligible because the imbalance in the exchange of bills in previous years was minor). One measurable result would be if the municipalities obtained the SMSI grant for which they applied for assistance in performing a feasibility assessment of many proposed cost savings actions. With or without this funding, the supervisor appears to be ready to move forward.

Ultimately, many of the high-value cost saving opportunities will require intermunicipal agreements. Therefore, a short-term measure of success, possibly several months out, is the drafting and signing of a series of intermunicipal agreements. Long-term success measures, such as dollars saved, could be constructed as part of a comprehensive process of identifying the number of possible intermunicipal agreements across functional service delivery areas and projecting cost savings expected to result from the adoption of each agreement and in total. Such an exercise would be performed as part of a feasibility study the municipalities would like to conduct under the SMSI grant.

5.3 *Identify what specific forms of technical assistance were provided, or where technical assistance could have been helpful but was not available.*

The supervisor obtained funding from the Thompson Foundation for the November 18, 2006, conference. The municipalities submitted an SMSI grant application requesting assistance for a \$150,000 feasibility study to further assess the proposed cost-saving actions emerging from the November 18, 2006, conference. The supervisor mentioned he would like to have access to a repository of best practices specifically focusing on small town administrative structures. We believe local governments would also benefit from being able to model the system effects of particular changes on fiscal health five years out.

5.4 *Any helpful hints for others considering such a project?*

The current village mayor explained in an interview he would have approached the situation by introducing a business plan. They should have gotten a business plan from each group—the school district, village, and town—and then addressed the common elements where savings could possibly be achieved.

The supervisor thinks that the key to success in this initiative is the political will of the leadership. He knows that another key to progress is building public enthusiasm for change, which requires constant communication, and that the process will require that elected officials and general public all thoroughly consider the thorny issues. Also, any changes to the distribution of jobs can sabotage the process and will have to be accomplished through attrition, not elimination or transfer.

5.5 *How did the process followed in this project stack up against the “Ten Step Program For Shared Service Arrangements” Appendix C?”*

The overall Rhinebeck initiative to examine and establish several new areas of collaboration between the town, village, and school district is still in the planning stage, or step five. Within this framework, the supervisor and school district superintendent sent a strong message to community residents that the leadership is committed to working together and building trust by signing an intermunicipal agreement for one year to forego the previous practice of charging each other for facilities use. (This step was mostly symbolic, as the small savings for one jurisdiction resulted in a slight increase for the other). Other steps

taken to facilitate progress in the broader initiative closely approximate the Ten Step Program.

1. The problem in Rhinebeck requires some vision to perceive. Rhinebeck's tax rates have not increased dramatically from year to year, and we detected no significant amount of resident dissatisfaction with property taxes or services. However, forward-looking leadership could perceive eliminating redundancies arising from multiple layers of governments that evolved willy-nilly over a two hundred year period would help to stem the inevitable tide of increased operating costs. In recognition of the opportunity to stem this tide, the Supervisor met in spring 2006 with counterparts in the village and school district as a collaboration group and agreed to meet regularly to discuss cost savings opportunities. According to the SMSI grant application the collaboration group "seeks to identify and solve common problems, establish cost efficiencies in purchasing and provision of services and governmental operations, and improve policy consistency and implementation." The town contracted with an expert consultant organization, Shingebiss Associates, to provide assistance in preparing an SMSI grant application, which the three municipalities submitted in October. In November, the three municipalities held a foundation-supported conference open to the general public to seek resident input and tap indigenous knowledge on local problem and potential solutions.
2. Municipal leaders took three important steps to create options to achieve efficiencies. First, they formed the collaboration group to create leadership cohesion. Second, they submitted the SMSI grant application to obtain funding to hire experts to conduct a feasibility analysis to assess what areas of reform provide the most potential for success. Third, they held the conference to obtain input from the general public and tap indigenous knowledge. Thus, Rhinebeck municipal leaders demonstrated a desire to reach out to all available parties who might provide assistance.

The leaders demonstrated strong network skills and capacity. The leadership of the three jurisdictions recognized each other as partners and actively sought to build trust. They enlarged the partnership to include members of the community and tapped the indigenous knowledge of local community residents. The leaders also located consultant experts who could focus the initiative, and identified and tapped a grant foundation to support the conference.

3. There is no specific project carrying a cost or reduction of cost. Instead, the leadership in collaboration with the consultant experts used a formula to predict the possible savings. Cost predictions outlined in the SMSI grant application submitted by the municipalities projected a \$67,250 annual savings. The SMSI grant funding application cited a 2003 NYS Office of the State Comptroller performance audit report projecting \$61,000 could be saved annually by integrating town and village justice courts. Additionally, the grant application predicted a return on the requested funding of \$2.50 for every dollar of grant money provided. The cost of conducting the feasibility study was estimated at \$149,500, with the municipality providing ten percent.
4. The feasibility study will assess the legal authority to conduct a wide range of efficiency achieving actions, including the adoption of a wide scope of intermunicipal agreements (e.g., equipment, services, and facilities sharing, or the merger of two departments performing similar functions). The leadership expects to adopt a series of intermunicipal agreements as a consequence of the recommendations of the feasibility analysis. When the town and the school district agreed to stop charging for facilities use, they formalized their decision by entering into an intermunicipal agreement.
5. Rhinebeck's municipal leaders demonstrated a progressive impulse to adapt to changing circumstances in planning the initiative. They worked together, sought expert assistance and foundation money, tapped the indigenous knowledge of the community in holding the conference, and submitted the SMSI grant application. In the SMSI application, municipal leaders projected how much they might save and explained how they would proceed. However, in documenting their need for the funding the municipal leaders did not describe a significant problem requiring immediate action. Instead, they wrote of long-term results of improved cooperation and reduced burden on taxpayers. Following the conference the municipalities began organizing the

information collected to further inform next steps. It is anticipated the results will be available soon.

6. The SMSI application outlines the intention of the municipal leadership to work with stakeholders to integrate feedback as the process proceeds.

5.6 Provide any additional comments, materials or observations relevant to the case.

6. Provide a Contact Person for Follow-up (at both the lead municipality and the academic institution)

Municipal Contact:

Steven Block, Supervisor
Town of Rhinebeck
845-876-3409 sgblock@aol.com

Richard Cunningham, Mayor
Village of Rhinebeck
845-876-7015

Academic Institution Contact:

Sydney Cresswell
Director, Intergovernmental Studies Program
Rockefeller College, University at Albany
122A Milne Hall, 135 Western Avenue
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(518) 442-5293
sgc@albany.edu

NYS Department of State
Albany Law School/Government Law Center
Shared Municipal Services Technical Assistance Project
Case Study Template
Appendix A – List of Contacts

Contact Information

Please include all the following information for the municipal and project contacts.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Mailing Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Fax</u>	<u>Email</u>
Kathy Kinsella	Director of Rhinebeck Highway Department		845-876-6263		
Joe Phelan	Rhinebeck School Superintendent		845-871-5520 ext. 5522		
Richard Cunningham	Mayor – Village of Rhinebeck		845-876-7015		
Steven Block	Rhinebeck Town Supervisor		845-876-3409		sgblock@aol.com

NYS Department of State

Albany Law School/Government Law Center

Shared Municipal Services Technical Assistance Project

Case Study Template

Appendix B – List of Legal Documents

Document List

Please list all documents that are relevant to the Case Study.

SMSI GRANT SUBMISSION CONTENTS

- 1 Grant application requirements
 - Work program—describes project, problem, activities, objectives, and schedule
 - Criteria response—describes municipal need to perform feasibility study and benefits, alignments between the project and existing areas of collaboration with local and state governments and regional compact organizations, managerial capacity to implement the project, and budget and cost savings projections
 - Budget details—describes the estimated cost of the project
 - Estimated cost savings—describes the estimated cost savings resulting from implementing steps recommended in the feasibility study.
 - Reasonableness of cost certification—provides assessment that cost savings projections are reasonable based on input from expert consulting firm.
- 2 IMA on facilities usage signed by town supervisor and school district superintendent on September 1, 2006
- 3 Town board resolution on January 9, 2006, authorizing the supervisor and a town board member to form the Rhinebeck collaboration group
- 4 School district board resolution on February 28, 2006, authorizing the superintendent and a school district board member to participate in forming the Rhinebeck Collaboration group
- 5 Village board resolution on March 14, 2006, authorizing the mayor and a village board member to participate in forming the Rhinebeck Collaboration group
- 6 Town board resolution authorizing the planning of the November 18, 2006, conference
- 7 Village board motion at August 8, 2006, meeting to support the proposed November 18, 2006, conference
- 8 Three letters dated October 20, 2006, from the participating municipalities to Kyle Wilber, SMSI program administrator at NYS Department of State, supporting the SMSI grant application

- 9 A letter from the town supervisor to Mr. Wilber thanking him for attending the November 18, 2006 conference.

OTHER DOCUMENTS

“Can We Improve How Our Schools, Town, & Village Work Together?” Schedule of November 18, Conference.

“Rhinebeck Schools, Village and Town: Current Level of Official Municipal Cooperation: working document” Chart of integration, collaboration, and cooperation of municipal services.

“Town Village Cooperation Committee” The subcommittee reports of the 1991 attempt at consolidation.

Letter from Peter Sipperly, November 15, 1991. Village mayor’s response to 1991 report.

Executive Summary, from the office of the State Comptroller. Provides an outline of service sharing and cost savings projects.

“Town of Mount Pleasant and Village of Pleasantville Police Study: Financial and Legal Options for Cost Savings” Overview of another municipal attempt at cost savings.

THE TEN STEP PROGRAM FOR SHARED SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Define problem and affected parties

Focus on the problem to be solved, working with experts, constituents and others with knowledge who can help devise options

2. Identify solutions and potential partners

Create options that can help solve the problem
Identify the potential partners who can help solve the problem

3. List and allocate financial impacts

Determine cost
Determine tax and debt limitations
Identify methods for financing, including potential federal/state aid
Assess impact on tax rate

4. Confirm legal authority

Check state statutes, including General Municipal Law articles 5-G and 14-G, as well as Town, Village, County and other related laws, and seek legislative authority if necessary
Adopt appropriate local authority

5. Plan the project

Document the need for services, determine costs and financing, prepare impact statements for constituents and on other services, develop plan for implementation and assessment

6. Collaborate with affected parties

Discuss plans with constituents, non profits, businesses, local organizations such as Chamber of Commerce, other governmental agencies, unions
Agree on roles of affected parties and how to assess impact, effectiveness and success

7. Negotiate the Agreement

Identify necessary terms to be included
Identify facilitator to assist negotiations
Finalize terms

8. Prepare Agreement

Whether written or oral, formal or informal, an agreement specifying the terms of agreement should be memorialized in some manner, especially regarding parties, nature of agreement, level of service, limits on service, charges/financing arrangements, organizational control and responsibilities, reporting, personnel matters, duration, termination, amendment, evaluation, continuation

9. Implement the Agreement

Initiate the programmatic elements of the project
Communicate as warranted with the town constituents
Document all aspects of the project for transparency and assessment

10. Evaluate the Project

Examine the implementation to ensure proper function using objective factors
Convene regular meetings to assess and share information
Prepare formal evaluation reports to ensure goals and processes satisfied