

Ashford Town Board opts out of tax installment law

Monday October 22, 2012 | By: Jessie Owen, Journal editor

ASHFORD — The Ashford Town Board elected to not support a local law allowing for the collection of property taxes and special assessments on an installment basis. During their regular meeting held Oct. 10, Ashford Board members passed a resolution to write a letter voicing their collective opposition to this law.

Cattaraugus County Administrator John Searles sent a copy of local law No. 10-2012 to town supervisors and tax collectors, asking them to weigh in on the county's becoming the tax collection agency for the "purpose of collecting taxes and special assessments, in installments."

Under the new law, which would potentially become effective Jan. 1, 2014, constituents could pay applicable taxes in "two equal installments. The first of which shall be due and payable not later than the 15th day of the month in which the respective taxes may be paid, without interest, to the local receiver or collector of taxes. The second ... shall be due and payable not later than the first day of the sixth month thereafter, to the county treasurer of the county of Cattaraugus."

According to the local law, residents opting to pay their taxes in installments would receive a service charge of 2 1/2 percent of their amount of taxes as levied, "which it is estimated will reimburse the county for the expense incurred in the administration of the installment collection of taxes, as prescribed by this local law."

According to Ashford Town Clerk Patricia Dashnaw, "If someone wanted to, they could pay in installments with increments of penalties." Searles said that the local law would "require a higher degree of record-keeping and delayed payment to the county of the full amount of taxes/assessments owed."

Local municipalities may opt into the installment payment process, although Searles warned that local law No. 10-2012 "would impact the way your town collects taxes, should you choose to opt into participation."

Dashnaw called accepting taxes in installments a "bookkeeping nightmare" and said that she did not believe this type of option was necessary in Ashford. "It isn't a big problem to begin with," she said. "We get 90 percent of our tax levy within three months. They are due, without penalty, in January. The penalty is pretty minimal: 1 percent in February and 2 percent in March."

The town clerk added she could count "on one hand" the number of local residents who have asked to pay taxes in installments, during the five years she has acted as town clerk. Instead, she said that many have requested to pay their taxes by credit card. "That way, you put it all on your card and pay that, in your own installments," she said.

The board members were in agreement with Dashnaw's assessment and voted to write a letter in opposition to local law No. 10-2012.

Springville Journal, October 22, 2012

In other matters:

– New York State Energy Research and Development Authority West Valley Site Management Program Director Paul Bembia reported that the West Valley Demonstration Project has been open for archery season since Oct. 1. “The reported take so far is one doe,” he said. A total of 238 hunters registered, this year.

– Bembia also said that decommissioning activities are continuing at the WVDP. The main plant process building, test tower and 01-14 building are all being prepared for demolition.

In addition, he reported that there has been no change in the federal appropriation for the cleanup at West Valley. “The ... budget request included only \$50 million for the WVDP,” he said. “This is a concern, because funding at this level will extend the length of the first phase of decommissioning from 10 years to 20 years.” He said that constituents could contact their local government representatives to appeal for more funding.

– The board passed a resolution advising the contractor at the Fox Valley Road project that the Nov. 1 deadline was set in stone and that the “paving should be done sooner, rather than later.” Town Supervisor Chris Gerwitz said that the progress made on that road “looks good.” After the project is complete and Highway Superintendent Tim Engels does patching on the road, Fox Valley Road will be re-opened.

– As many of the town’s radios as possible will be upgraded to narrow-band frequency. Board Member John Pfeffer recommended that the representative coming to do the installations also takes a look at the police radios.

– Repairs were done on truck No. 19. Although Engels said he believed the work would be covered by warranty, he said that the town still received “quite a hefty bill.”

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held Nov. 14 at 7:30 p.m.