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Mount Kisco Continues Police Consolidation Talks With County

By Neal Rentz

Mount Kisco Mayor Michael Cindrach said last week he was optimistic that a police consolidation agreement could still be reached with Westchester County.

Cindrach said the village is waiting on a formal proposal from the office of the county executive. In an effort to reduce expenses, the village has been in contact with county officials about the possibility of consolidation.

"I have attended several meetings and devoted a lot of time to this topic and I am hopeful the county will act," he said.

Cindrach said he began discussions with the Department of Public Safety in the fall of 2011 and agency officials provided an analysis that included enhanced police services at a significant cost savings to the village, although the

precise level of savings have not yet been determined. Enhanced services include patrol, investigations, special operations and community services, Cindrach said.

"From a regional prospective, northern Westchester would benefit by having a real county police presence, similar to other parts of the county," Cindrach said.

Kieran O'Leary, a spokesman for the Department of Public Safety, confirmed last week the county and the village are continuing discussions regarding police consolidation. Any proposal for consideration would have to come from the county executive's office.

The county already provides some special police services to Mount Kisco that the local department is not equipped to handle, such as expert crime scene investigations, aviation support,

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specialized investigations, training, bomb squad services and crime pattern analysis, Cindrich said.

Certain duties currently performed by the Mount Kisco police would continue, with the majority of policing and public safety responsibilities being assigned to the county, he said.

Diminishing tax dollars in recent years has forced public officials to explore and promote greater service sharing. For police work, the potential fiscal advantage is not the only benefit.

"At all levels of government the idea of consolidation of services has gotten a lot of play," Cindrich said. "This is a real opportunity to improve public safety and save taxpayers money."

Before the village and county can enter into a contract, the two parties would first need to "analyze legal and civil service issues," O'Leary said.

In December, the county Board of Legislators approved legislation to encourage more sharing of police services between the county and

municipalities. Prior to the approval of the measure, the county could provide specific police services to a municipality, but not all police services.

The Village of Pleasantville, which had also been considering a similar move, abandoned the idea last year after officials never received a proposal from the county after about 18 months. That decision was made before the new intermunicipal agreement legislation was passed.