

## **MERGER OF THE TOWN OF LYNDON AND VILLAGE OF LYNDONVILLE**

At the Town's Annual Meeting held on March 1, 2005, Town voters approved a resolution asking the Town Selectboard to approach the Village Trustees to discuss the issue of a merger.

At the Village's Annual Meeting held on March 15, 2005, Village voters approved a resolution asking the Village Trustees to meet with the Town Selectboard to discuss a possible merger of the Town and Village and to come back to the voters at the next Village Annual Meeting to present the pros and cons of such a merger.

In May, 2005, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Trustees established a committee of seven citizens, one Selectman, and one Trustee to study the topic. Known as the Merger Investigation Committee, the group was given the following assignment: "study the advantages and disadvantages of forming one single municipal entity to perform all municipal functions currently offered by the town of Lyndon and the Village of Lyndonville. The option of one single entity should be evaluated with regard to its potential for greater responsiveness to the citizens and the likelihood of more effective use of tax dollars." Members of Merger Investigation Committee were Page Dame, Marty Feltus, Pat Jauch, Oralie Lefavre, Ken Mason, Norm Messier, Sue Mills, Eric Paris, and Wilder Simpson. The Committee presented their finding to the Selectboard and Trustees in their report dated December 13, 2005.

At the Town's Annual Meeting held on March 7, 2006, an overview was given of the work performed by the Merger Investigation Committee and the committee's findings were reviewed. Town voters approved a resolution asking the Selectboard to proceed with the plan of merger.

At the Village's Annual Meeting held on March 21, 2006, the report of the Merger Investigation Committee was made available. Village voters approved a resolution asking the Trustees to move ahead with a plan of merger.

In June, 2006, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Trustees established the Merger Proposal Committee and gave them the following assignment: "1. propose draft charter of merged municipality, 2. propose solutions to some of the operational challenges." Members of the Merger Proposal Committee were Dick Boera, Page Dame, David Dill, Marty Feltus, Teresa Vasko, Peter Hopkins, Mike Wheeler, and Steve Pitman. Town Agent, Robert Gensburg, Village Agent, Joe Benning, and Municipal Administrator Art Sanborn worked closely with the committee. As assigned, the committee presented a proposed charter to the Selectmen and Trustees in September. Several public hearings were also held in September to gather public input on the document. On October 3, 2006, the Village Trustees approved the proposed charter and signed the Memorandum of Understanding, describing how the merged entity would operate between the effective date of the merger, July 1, 2007, and the beginning operating date of the merger, January 1, 2008. A Special Village Meeting was called for November 7, 2006, to determine the wishes of the Village voters regarding the proposed charter. On October 4, 2006, the Town Selectboard approved the proposed charter and signed the Memorandum of Understanding. A Special Town Meeting was called for November 7, 2006, to

determine the wishes of the Town voters regarding the proposed charter. Both municipalities held informational meetings on October 16<sup>th</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss the proposed charter. Once approved by the Town voters and the Village voters, the proposed charter would then go before the Vermont Legislature for approval.

At the Special Town Meeting, held on November 7, 2006, the voters of the Town of Lyndon approved the proposed charter, with 927 Yes votes and 838 No votes. Voter turnout was 1905 of 3117, or 61%.

At the Special Village Meeting, held on November 7, 2006, the voters of the Village of Lyndonville approved the proposed charter, with 227 Yes votes and 103 No votes. Voter turnout was 338 of 623, or 54%.

On December 4, 2006, the Selectboard received a petition calling for the rescission of the November 7<sup>th</sup> vote. A Special Town Meeting was called for January 16, 2007, to vote again on the proposed charter.

At the Special Town Meeting, held on January, 16, 2007, the voters of the Town of Lyndon did not approve the proposed charter, with 435 Yes votes and 695 No votes. Voter turnout was 1131 of 3134, or 36%.