

Mohan, Williams (Continued from page one)

with for more than 30 years on various levels.

"GAR has been here before ... they are experienced and know the town," he said.

GAR Associates' contract with the town ended in December 2006. According to GAR Associates Vice President F. Cindy Baire the Town of Amherst still owes the company \$20,000.

She said in the past 30 years there has never before been a problem with payment of invoices.

In order to meet the requirements to be at 100 percent assessment in 2008, the parcels would need to be done by September and all the paperwork completed in December, Williams estimated. The estimate was based on a state timeline.

Why a town would want to be assessed at 100 percent is based on many reasons, Williams said, including amounts concerning exemptions, the portion of county sales tax received and school district taxes.

At 95 percent, instead of 100 percent, Williams said the town will pay more to the county based on the current, complicated formula.

Mohan responded to the concerns about meeting the deadline and said the town will be assessed

at 100 percent for 2008 and also believes there is more than enough time.

"We will have a plan in a month or two. There is a fear, excitement," he said about the reassessment program.

He added, "We will look at the 43,000 parcels, everything."

When asked how the town will pay for the effort, Mohan said, "We will have to get a consultant and pay only \$211,000. We will have to find the funding resources."

He said that all 65 neighborhoods in town will be reassessed in eight months. In the past, he added, the town has not looked at each neighborhood but only those that had at least a 5 percent change in sales, either an increase or decrease.

He added that with the use of computers it will be easier for the town to submit the assessment information.

One of Mohan's main reasons for pushing for the assessment department changes is the number of complaints he said he has dealt with.

Town resident Ron Nowak addressed the Town Board during Monday's work session on such concerns, including properties that haven't been reassessed in

years and others that are constantly reassessed.

He also questioned the value of vacant lots compared to the amount for which they are sold. Nowak told the board he had been compiling information for more than a year.

During Monday's meeting, Mohan had recommended Nowak for the Assessment Review Committee. The board voted to hold the decision. Those serving on the review committee are paid \$600 a day, Williams said.

Nothing had been settled by the close of Monday's meeting.

The Town Board also discussed forming an assessment committee, including input from the school districts, to analyze the process.

Last week, Joseph Muscarella, from the state's Office of Real Property Services, told the board that if the town were to be at 100 percent assessed value in 2008 it should have already started reassessing the 43,000 parcels.

The town is also required to have a six-year plan that, according to Williams, has been sitting on Mohan's desk since February. Mohan said the plan doesn't have to be signed and submitted until October.

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better for the vast majority of the retirees. McCarthy added that whether the plans are equal is largely subjective.

A meeting between Independent Health, the town's insurance provider, and McCarthy and Mohan was scheduled for this week.

Mohan said he plans to prepare a comparative sheet to show the retirees how the Medicare plan is the same as the current plan.

He also plans to write to the attorney general for his opinion on the legality of the issue.

During Monday's meeting, Town Attorney Tom Jones was asked for his opinion. He said the town is not locked into one program but the benefit coverage is a contractual obligation that requires retirees to be entitled to the same benefits.

Mohan's resolution said the Medicare program was for retirees 65 years of age and older. Currently there are 75 town retirees in the Medicare Encompass plan.

The resolution called for an additional 172 retirees to be moved to the program.

Council Member William A. O'Loughlin Jr. attempted to explain the program, of which he is

a member.

"It's a terrific plan, equal to or better than (retirees) get now," he said. "This is more cost-efficient."

McCarthy reported that in 2006 the town paid \$3.7 million in retirement insurance costs.

In another contractual issue, a resolution sponsored by Mohan upset Highway Department workers.

Chris O'Neil, president of the Amherst Highway Employees Association, spoke during Monday's meeting, saying the town was trying to force the association into a single medical carrier without negotiating it.

"We need to return to the bargaining table, and continue negotiations and actually negotiate," he said, adding that there has been very little bargaining from the town.

The unsettled contract has been costing the town more than \$500,000 a year.

It is estimated that the town pays \$42,000 a month for health insurance for highway workers.

Mohan was requesting that the highway association, which has 140 members, consider moving to Independent Health's Passport Plan.

The board voted 5-2 against the resolution, with Mohan and O'Loughlin voting in favor of it.

McCarthy said contract negotiations will continue. The contract has been unsettled since the end of 2005.

Tough

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"I appreciate that, and it demonstrates the professionalism at Williamsville."

Students who miss any of the instructional days will be charged with an absence and will need the excuse of a parent or guardian—the district's normal operating procedure.

When 2 feet of snow dropped on leaf-covered trees in October the landscape, roads and power lines were affected. In a state of emergency, the Williamsville district closed from Oct. 13-23.

Sweet Home School District

All schools in the Sweet Home Central School District will be closed for spring recess from Friday, April 6 through Friday, April 13. The district eliminated teacher conference days in order to retain the original spring recess schedule following the October storm. Also, each district elementary school will have a full day of classes on Friday, April 27 rather than the half day originally scheduled. The middle and high schools will also have a full day of classes on April 27.

Amherst Central School District

The Amherst Central School District did not have to schedule classes during spring break. Students will be on recess from April 6-13.

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