

November 16, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT BY WILLIAM DENTZER, CHAIR OF THE TRI-MUNICIPAL STUDY GROUP ON SHARING/CONSOLIDATION OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Since more than eight months have elapsed since our Group submitted its report, I want to make it known that parochialism appears to be defeating our efforts to save area taxpayers from \$350,000 to \$450,000 annually.

The single most important cost-savings recommendation in our March 2010 report was to establish a Joint Detective Task Force composed of the nine detectives in the Town of Mamaroneck and Larchmont Village police departments. This small unit serving both departments would be under the command of Larchmont police chief Poleway. After a period of actual experience, we believe only six or seven detectives would be deemed necessary for this unit; two or three of the original nine could be returned to their legacy departments to exercise employment rights under their union contracts, probably replacing retiring officers in their larger departments. Chief Poleway would recommend to the Town Council and Village Board which officers should comprise the detective unit going forward. (For the complete text of this recommendation, see pages 7-10 of our report at www.trimunireport2010.org, our website that now includes this statement.

I presented our report first to Town Supervisor Valerie O’Keeffe since she initiated the idea of forming our study group and my chairing it. I met with her and Town Administrator Steve Altieri on March 8 before meeting with the mayors of Larchmont and Mamaroneck. Altieri called me later that day to say that the Joint Task Force was a good idea but would be “dead on arrival” at the Town if Poleway was in charge. I responded that Poleway was our unanimous choice to make those recommendations and I was not free to change that. Knowing of this conversation, Supervisor O’Keeffe called me saying that our recommendation placed her in a difficult spot (presumably since we chose the Larchmont police chief, not the Town’s); I acknowledged that but said it was based on our sense of who was the best manager to make these recommendations to the two boards.

Following my speech on the report at the Local Summit on April 20, Supervisor O’Keeffe assured the audience that the two police chiefs “were talking”; they may have talked about something, but not about our report.

Later, at a joint May 19 meeting of the Town Council and Village Board that I attended, the Larchmont Board reported its vote to support our recommendation, but the Supervisor said study was needed to determine how much each government would save and the legal issues involved. However, a study of potential savings to each government is pointless since no one can know

now which and how many officers would be returned to their legacy departments. Also, our report is clear about the legal issues: the Town police unit has the right under New York's union-friendly Taylor Law to prevent Larchmont detectives from acting as detectives in the Town and could initiate a grievance to block that. What is not known is whether the Town Council would urge the police union not to stick its finger in the public's eye at a cost to taxpayers of several hundred thousand dollars annually and whether that union would forego a grievance on this matter.

At the conclusion of that May 19 joint meeting, upon the motion and second of two Town Council members, the Council endorsed "the spirit of creating a joint detective task force," subject to further study. The problem is that as good as her record has been, Supervisor O'Keefe seems to want consolidation only if the Town does the consolidating. Was our recommendation "dead on arrival" at the Town?