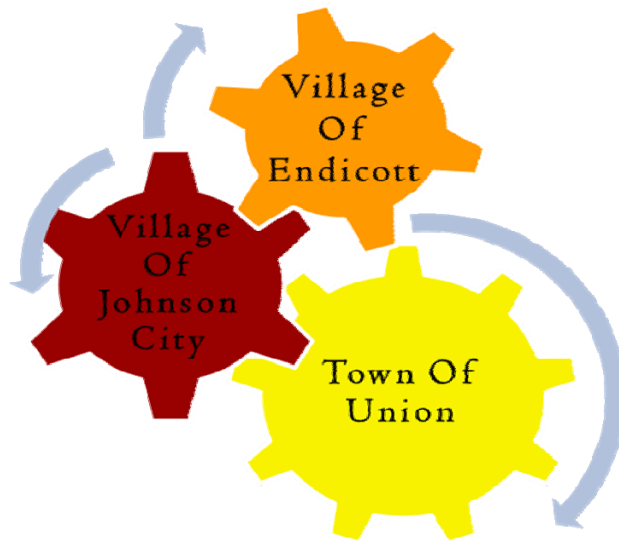


Goals & Objectives

Chapter 11



Government Services

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Government Services

11

MISSION STATEMENT: TO ENSURE THAT MUNICIPAL SERVICES MEET THE NEEDS AND THE DESIRES OF RESIDENTS AND ARE PROVIDED IN AN EFFICIENT AND COST EFFECTIVE MANNER.

The Town of Union and the Villages of Endicott and Johnson City provide a wide array of services. Delineating which services are essential and which services are dispensable is very difficult. Town Law requires the Town to have a Clerk, Highway Superintendent, Justice, and Tax Collector/Assessor. Beyond establishing these offices, there are no mandated services. Historically, Villages incorporated in order to provide additional services for their denser populations and more diverse development.

Public works functions, including street maintenance, snow plowing, refuse collection, public water, and sewage treatment, are usually considered basic services. But Vestal and Chenango, for example, do not provide municipal refuse collection and the northerly portions of Union do not have public water or sewers. Police and fire protection are municipal departments in both villages but not in the town. Libraries, parks, recreation programs, planning, engineering, economic development, personnel, and comptroller services are not provided by many local governments.

Levels of service also are diverse. Refuse collection may include the pick-up of household trash, recycling, yard waste, white goods, and construction debris. Trash pick-up is different for single-family residences, multifamily residences, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses. Pick-up may be weekly for some items and annually for others.

Providing a particular municipal service raises several questions:

- Should the service be provided?
- Is there a demand for the service?
- Who will receive the service?
- Will the demand remain the same in the future or will it change?

- Will the service be town-wide, village-wide, or restricted to a special district?
- Will property taxes, user fees, or some other manner pay for it?
- Will it be provided by municipal employees or as a contracted service?
- What is the frequency of the service?
- What is the level of service?
- Can the service be shared or consolidated?

Government Services Goals

GOV-1	Evaluate services to determine needs, cost effectiveness, and priorities for funding;
GOV-2	Make government services user friendly;
GOV-3	Work toward reducing the tax burden;
GOV-4	Ensure that government services and actions are equitable.

Objectives – Government Services

Objective A. Evaluate services to determine needs, cost effectiveness, and priorities for funding.

a. Service

Policies

1. Survey residents, property owners, and business representatives to determine service needs, priorities, and alternative ways of providing services;
2. Determine objectives, operational costs, and projected benefits of all departments for budgetary purposes;
3. Explore alternative means of conducting each function for cost efficiency.

Objective B. Make government services user friendly.

a. Service

Policies

1. Streamline the permit approval procedures;
2. Provide forms and ordinances available in a format suitable for people with disabilities;
3. Provide information to explain services and their availability, local laws, and assistance programs to property owners;
4. Provide a single point of contact for information on the municipality and municipal services;

5. Conduct periodic surveys of property owners and businesses to address municipal concerns, problems, and cost impacts of actions;
6. Encourage recycling and re-use of waste by promotion of eco-industrial projects;
7. Coordinate refuse pick-up days with the operating times of the businesses;
8. Provide up-to-date information about municipal and other local services on respective web pages;
9. Explore Internet options for direct payments of property tax bills, water/sewer bills, parks, registration, fines, and other municipal payments.

Objective C. Work toward reducing the tax burden.

a. Service

Policies

1. Investigate ways for cost sharing of purchasing supplies, equipment, and operations among municipalities;
2. Eliminate duplicated services provided by town, villages, and other taxing agencies;
3. Study PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) agreements for tax-exempt properties to pay for services.

Objective D. Ensure that government services and actions are equitable.

a. Service

Policies

1. Develop a working committee comprised of board members from the town and two villages;
2. Add code enforcement officers to increase enforcement of existing codes;
3. Require reimbursement from property owners for code violations remedied by municipality;
4. Amend Town and Village codes to use similar definitions and requirements;
5. Review ordinances on a periodic basis to determine continued need, applicability, and integration with other ordinances;
6. Familiarize refuse personnel with municipal code and have them report any code enforcement issues on route;
7. Enforce snow emergency parking procedures in a consistent manner.