

Goodrich hears pitch from county road commission boss

GOODRICH

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GOODRICH - Village Council members remain uncertain about a Genesee County Road Commission offer that could save the village money, end the village's Department of Public Works and leave three people unemployed.

During Monday's council meeting, John H. Daly III, manager-director of the Road Commission, discussed taking control of roads in the county's three villages.

Gaines has turned down the offer, and Daly will meet with Otisville Village Council in September.

Goodrich council members will discuss the offer again at its Sept. 10 meeting at 7 p.m. in the lower level of the village office, 7338 S. State Road.

"I was a village manager for three years in northern Ohio (Lafayette), so I have an inkling of what goes on down in the trenches," Daly told the council.

"There's not always enough money to cover everything. Sometimes you have to import money from the general fund."

Villages and cities receive money for streets from Michigan's Public Act 51. The village received \$99,300 for the 2007-08 fiscal year in Act 51 funds, said village Administrator Jakki Sidge.

When Act 51 money runs out, the village must use its general fund to cover the road bills. If jurisdiction is transferred to the Road Commission, the county would receive about \$33,000 in Act 51 money for Goodrich and responsibility of covering costs after funds are depleted also will transfer, said Daly.

"Everything is going up, revenue sharing is at risk. Can we get through this year? Probably yes, but in four years we're going to start seeing problems. Some hard roads might need to change to gravel roads, and that would be a huge liability shift if jurisdiction transferred to the Road Commission from the village," he said. Resident Greg Tankersley urged council members to consider the option, and ask more questions before making a decision.

"I'm not saying to get rid of the DPW or to make any decisions right now. I think you should sit down and take a look at the information. Are there things that the county can provide for less money? Is there a way to work together?" he said during public comment.

Resident Norman Bass agreed that serious thought should go into the decision for the sake of the DPW employees, and the quality of service the village receives.

"This is a deep subject," he said. "We do have a DPW staff and they do more than manage the roads. How much are we losing if we do this? If it's under our control, we decide when to act. A lot of hard thought needs to go into this."

Village DPW employees also manage the parks, beautification, maintenance of public buildings, plow snow from business parking lots and sidewalks in the village.

The quality and timeliness of road service is a concern for council members David Lucik and Peter Morey, who asked about services and where Goodrich would land as a priority for the

Road Commission.

Subdivisions are the lowest priority in receiving service, while main strips such as M-15/State Road would receive service first, said Daly. Hegel Road would qualify as a step above a subdivision, he said. The Road Commission will not plow or salt sidewalks or business parking lots, he said.

The village could negotiate specific details about snowplowing, salting, dams, emergency road service and other scenarios into the contract.

Daly suggested the village also consider a maintenance contract, which allows more flexibility than a transfer of jurisdiction.