

## Why Cooperate, Why Now?

Local government is getting more complicated every year. The burden on volunteer Board members is large and increasing.

Several Selectmen in Perry, Pembroke and Charlotte have served for many years and are seeking to retire. The 3 towns have also benefited from close to 60 years of dedicated service by the Treasurer in Charlotte and over 25 years by the Clerk in Pembroke and Perry. Charlotte Treasurer Grace Hatton is seeking to retire soon. Pembroke and Perry Town Clerk Janice Scanlon will also be retiring in the next several years. Both are willing to assist in the transition to the new form of managing town administration.

The Selectmen in all 3 towns have spent many meetings over the last 2 years to find ways to prepare for these changes and to explore how to improve service by working together and learn from other towns.

## How do we cooperate now?

Perry and Pembroke share a Town Clerk, Assessing Agent (and Trio software) Tax Collector and Registrar of Voters. All are part time staff and operate from their own homes.

All three towns coordinate on delivery of education.

All three towns participate in Mutual Aid Agreements for emergency response.

## What Money?

- The 3 towns obtained a grant for \$75,000 from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank (MMBB).
- The \$75,000 "Credit Quality Improvement" Grant from the MMBB was successful because the Bond Bank believes that the cooperative efforts the towns propose to take will improve their ability to manage and borrow funds.
- The goal is to explore consolidation of administrative services among the three towns, to ensure continuity of service, make efficient use of training budgets and resources, and modernize/computerize existing systems.
- The outcome will be efficient, timely and accurate responses to the multiple demands placed on public servants.

## What will this money allow us to do differently?

A primary goal of the project and the grant funds is to explore opportunities to improve service delivery based on existing and positive relationships. Grant funds will be used to:

- Develop town web sites with on-line access to town information.
- Digitize parcel maps and link them to assessment information on-line and, in future, link them to the County Registry of deeds.
- Develop job descriptions for joint professional staff.
- Find suitable office space.
- Purchase office equipment and computers.
- Hire professional staff for one year until services can be "sold" to other towns to offset costs.

# Pembroke Perry and Charlotte

A Proposal for  
Shared Staff and Services

Why now?

What will it cost?

How would it improve services?

What say do voters have?

## Why not continue as we are?

### Service is limited:

- There are town offices in Perry and Charlotte but not in Pembroke.
- Office hours are very limited: 1 hour/week in Perry, 6 hours/week in Charlotte and by appointment in Pembroke.

### Public services from private homes:

- Public services are delivered from private homes which raises liability issues for the towns.
- Such informality can be abused when appointments are made and not kept - disrupting the personal lives of public servants who put off their own needs to provide services.
- Offices are cramped and storage of records is not secure.

### Demands are increasing:

- It is getting harder to find those willing to serve on the Select Board. With part time staff Selectmen must meet the growing demands of municipal governance. New Board members face a steep learning curve as well as expensive and time consuming training demands.
- In the past, and in other towns, new Board members have soon quit when faced with the size of the task. The result is disruption of service, extra (and expensive) training, and a cycle of further inefficiencies and disrupted service.
- Grant opportunities and legislation affecting municipalities need staff support to respond to time sensitive deadlines.

## What might it cost?

<b>Costs and Services - Existing</b>				
	<b>Tax Collector</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b>	
<b>Pembroke</b>	\$27,246.03	\$5,434.46	\$1,108.20	
<b>Perry</b>	\$7,500.00	\$6,500.00	\$2,700.00	
<b>Charlotte</b>	\$7,000.00	\$4,016.00		
<b>Total - from current taxes</b>	<b>\$41,746.03</b>	<b>\$15,950.46</b>	<b>\$3,808.20</b>	<b>\$61,504.69</b>
<b>Estimated Costs and Services - with Shared Staff</b>				
	<b>Admin. Assistant/ Deputy Treasurer/ Deputy Clerk</b>	<b>Tax Collector/ Town Clerk</b>	<b>Treasurer/ Information Manager/ Deputy Tax Collector</b>	
<b>All 3 towns</b>				
Base Pay	\$40,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$32,000.00	
Benefits - medical	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	
Retirement	\$1,200.00	\$1,050.00	\$960.00	
Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment	\$3,465.60	\$3,083.10	\$2,853.60	
<b>Total - from current tax base, \$30,000 from MMBB grant in FY07</b>	<b>\$53,665.60</b>	<b>\$48,133.10</b>	<b>\$44,813.60</b>	<b>\$146,612.30</b>
	<b>Pembroke</b>	<b>Perry</b>	<b>Charlotte</b>	
Net impact FY08	\$22,043.04	\$22,043.04	\$11,021.52	<b>\$55,107.61</b>
Net Impact FY09 if no other towns purchase ** services	\$34,043.04	\$34,043.04	\$17,021.52	<b>\$85,107.61</b>
Net impact FY09 if 1 town purchases services	\$28,043.04	\$28,043.04	\$14,021.52	<b>\$70,107.61</b>
Net impact FY09 if 2 towns purchase services	\$22,043.04	\$22,043.04	\$11,021.52	<b>\$55,107.61</b>
Net impact FY09 if 3 towns purchase services	\$16,043.04	\$16,043.04	\$8,021.52	<b>\$40,107.61</b>
<b>** Fee for a town to "purchase" services = \$15,000/yr.</b>				

## What are the Benefits?

- Better access to services.
- Convenience of longer hours.
- Reduce town liability.
- Continue to attract/retain qualified professional staff.
- Improve compensation to employees.
- Cross training of employees.
- Efficient use of public facilities.
- Model for other towns.
- Support to (and retention of) Select Board members.
- Capacity to serve other towns in the region to offset costs (*Cooper, Dennysville and Meddybemps have expressed an interest*).

## Who Decides What and When?

All 3 towns will decide whether to change from electing the Town Clerk, Tax Collector and Treasurer to appointing these positions. This decision must be made by Town meeting vote at least 90 days before the Annual Town meeting at which the change will take effect. Therefore July 2008 is the earliest that the change would take effect.

A committee of the 3 Select Boards of Pembroke, Perry and Charlotte would then hire professional staff to fill the three positions described in the chart of estimated expenses to the left.

Finally, a centrally located building – of new construction or rented – must be secured to house the shared staff. A CDBG grant for a community center in Pembroke could be requested with the local match requirement used to construct municipal office facilities.