

The LEADER OPINIO

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Let your voice be heard now

THE ISSUE | Companies look to buy water from Painted Post.

OUR OPINION | At first glance it looks like a good deal, but we urge residents to weigh in while the review process proceeds.

A few million gallons of water for a few million dollars.

That seems like a deal worth considering.

The Village of Painted Post could be paid more than \$2 million annually if it agrees to sell some of its municipal water to be used for hydrofracking by natural gas companies in Pennsylvania.

The water – 500,000 gallons per day with the possibility it could reach 1 million gallons – is a volume that could be handled by the village's water system and would be taken south by railcar.

The plan – recently proposed to the village planning board by The Myles Group – involves building a water depot on the old Ingersoll-Rand foundry site which would connect to the existing rail service. The Myles Group owns the Wellsboro and Corning Railroad.

There's word another company also wants to buy village water and truck it down to Pennsylvania. More water; more money.

This would create a huge revenue windfall for the village that had fallen on hard times financially. Taxes have gone up and most services have been reduced.

Also, there's a study under way looking into ways to merge Painted Post with the Town of Erwin – a worthwhile endeavor that should not be influenced by a flash of prosperity. If plans go through unimpeded, the depot could be operational in the late summer.

Right now, the proposal is in the hands of the village's planning board. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission has already given permission for large amounts of water to be used but an environmental impact study will have to be done for the project to move forward.

Is this deal all-good, or are there some pitfalls here?

At first blush, it looks like a pretty good way to benefit the village without many drawbacks. But peel some layers away, and who knows?

We urge residents with opinions about this project – both for and against – to express them to the local and state authorities. The water depot could have a profound impact and the time to weigh in is before final decisions have been made.