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Ontario County to lease landfill

Lawmakers ratify \$119 million deal with Vermont trash hauler.

By Jack Jones  
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(October 4, 2003) — CANANDAIGUA — Ontario County is washing its hands of the landfill business.

Members of the county Board of Supervisors voted overwhelmingly Thursday night to lease operating rights to the 300-acre county landfill in the hamlet of Flint to Casella Waste Systems, a private, Vermont-based trash hauler.

Casella has agreed to pay the county more than \$119 million over the life of the 25-year contract.

“This is good news for everybody,” said Canandaigua City Supervisor David Baker, chairman of the county’s solid waste committee.

“It will help county taxpayers by keeping our (property) tax rate down for 2004, and it may help us to freeze or even lower the tax rate in 2005,” he said.

Baker said the county will receive an upfront payment of about \$17 million and be able to free up \$4.3 million more now in an escrow landfill bond account when the deal is signed by the end of the year.

That will be before Casella officially takes over in January.

During the regularly scheduled meeting, the 21-member board voted 20 to 1 in favor of privatizing the landfill operation, with Geneva Supervisor Mary Luckern casting the dissenting vote.

During a series of hearings on the landfill privatization plan, Luckern expressed concerns about additional truck traffic and noise at the landfill on Routes 5 and 20 in the town of Seneca near the town of Geneva through which many of the trash haulers will travel.

Baker said that under the lease deal, an estimated seven more trucks a day will visit the site to dump trash that Casella will bring in from outside the area.

County employees currently working at the landfill will keep their jobs and county benefits under the

leasing arrangement with Casella, and Ontario County municipal trash haulers will continue to use the site at reduced rates, Baker said.

In addition, Casella will install a sewer line along Routes 5 and 20 from the landfill to a sewage treatment plant in Canandaigua or Geneva, said Victor Supervisor Jack Richter.

Installing a sewer line will eliminate the need to truck out fluid runoff from the trash, Richter said.

“It’s a win-win situation for everyone,” Richter said.

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