

# ***FINGER LAKES*** ***TIMES*** ***ONLINE***

**Ontario officials delay decision on landfill lease *Friday, September 12, 2003***

**By ANDREA DECKERT Times Staff Writer**

CANANDAIGUA — While some Ontario County residents don't want the county to lease its landfill to any private business, two companies passed over for the lease are asking to be reconsidered.

The county Board of Supervisors heard from residents last night opposed to a pending 25-year lease agreement with Casella Waste Systems, of Rutland, Vt., for the county's landfill and recycling facility in Flint. Casella was one of three companies a county committee interviewed and the top contender for the deal.

The board laid over a resolution that would have granted the lease to Casella last night; earlier this month, the Solid Waste Management Committee unanimously supported the deal with Casella.

Under the agreement, the county would retain ownership of the facility and receive more than \$119 million from Casella over the term of the lease.

Residents, who also spoke at a public hearing earlier this week, worried that county officials were looking at the cash stream that would come from the lease and not looking hard enough at other issues that could arise, such as increased truck traffic, odor and litter, which would negatively impact the eastern side of the county.

"The town of Seneca has become the sacrificial lamb of the county," said Ken Snyder, a landfill employee who lives on Route 14A in Geneva.

Fred Amberg, who lives less than two miles from the site in Stanley, said he is not against privatization but does oppose increasing the amount of garbage brought there.

Currently, the county has a permit with the state Department of Environmental Conservation for roughly 2,000 tons of waste per day but traditionally takes in about half of that. A private company would likely accept the full amount, which would bring in more money but also other problems, residents said.

"Within one year, residents on White Springs Road in the town of Geneva will get the occasional drift of the aroma," Amberg said.

City of Geneva officials have voiced concerns over increased traffic, but Geneva City Supervisor Charles Evangelista said last night that additional truck traffic would not travel through the city.

Casella representatives have said that about 30 more trucks would be needed to haul the garbage if the company accepted the maximum amount of tonnage at the landfill each day and that some of those trucks — around six — would be routed down Route 96 and County Road 6 to Routes 5&20.

Phelps Supervisor Carmen Orlando and Geneva Town Supervisor Mary Luckern voiced concerns over that proposal, noting that Route 96 has recently been renovated.

“Six additional trucks is six trucks too many,” said Luckern, who also asked why a private consultant wasn’t sought to find out if the county could still run the landfill.

County officials pursued the lease option after they learned the facility could be in the red in the next few years.

While residents were opposed to the lease, the two other companies interviewed said they wanted to continue to negotiate with county leaders on the deal.

Representatives from IESI, of Fort Worth, Texas, and Republic Services, Inc., of Chantilly, Va., felt the county did not honor its request for proposals because it did not allow the companies to continue with negotiations.

Both companies said they offered Ontario County more money for the lease than Casella, each as much as \$130 million.

“The landfill is a significant asset, probably the most significant in Ontario County,” said Mickey Flood, president and chief executive officer of IESI, the company that is negotiating to buy Seneca Meadows in Seneca Falls.

Canandaigua City Supervisor David Baker, chairman of the Solid Waste Management Committee, said county officials followed the procedures set forth in the request for proposals.

“We reviewed the proposals and selected a company we felt would be in the best interests of the county and the residents,” said Baker, adding that Casella’s proposal includes plans for additional economic development at the site, including paying for utilities for a business park and giving the county a certain percentage of the tipping fees collected for out-of-county waste.

The county Board of Supervisors will likely vote on the lease with Casella at its Oct. 2 meeting. At that time, supervisors will also vote on how the money will be spent.

Manchester Supervisor Bill Eddinger, chairman of the county’s Financial Management Committee, said the money has not been placed in the county’s tentative 2004 budget and has not been earmarked yet, although if the lease is approved, the money from Casella would likely be used to pay for existing and future debt.