

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

Firm outlines landfill plans *Tuesday, September 09, 2003*

By **ANDREA DECKERT** Times Staff Writer

HOPEWELL — The company that wants to lease the local landfill says Ontario County could receive millions of dollars and the potential for new businesses if their proposal is accepted.

More than 100 people attended a public hearing at the county's Safety and Training Facility last night to hear the plans of Casella Waste Management, of Rutland, Vt. The county's Solid Waste Management Committee last week unanimously supported leasing the landfill in Flint to the company for 25 years.

The entire Board of Supervisors will vote on the lease agreement at its Oct. 2 meeting.

During the hour-long presentation, James Bohlig, Casella's president and chief operating officer, outlined the company's proposal, which includes taking over solid waste operations and making improvements to the site, from landscaping upgrades to supplying water, sewer and other utilities for a commercial business park at the front of the site, which could draw new business to the county.

The company would get the site ready for development by installing the utilities, and then turn it over to county developers to use as a tool to entice potential businesses. Casella also will provide a discounted disposal rate to companies that move into the county.

"We think this is a huge, attractive opportunity," said Bohlig, noting plans could also include moving the company's hauling business, Appleton Disposal on Doran Avenue in Geneva, to the site. "We want what you want for your community."

It could also be attractive to the cities of Canandaigua and Geneva since the company plans to pay for a leachate line from the site to one of the cities, reducing the number of trucks needed to haul the liquid waste to a waste water treatment facility.

Bohlig said the proposal complements the town of Seneca's master plan, in that it addresses visual concepts, the facility's integration with the community and the ability to use the site in ways other than as a traditional landfill.

The business park would be one part of the landfill, Bohlig said, noting that others spots on the 300-plus acre site on Routes 5&20 would include an upgraded recycling center that would allow residents to place all their recyclables in one curbside container and then it would be sorted on-site.

The third part of the facility would focus on collecting the methane gas generated from the garbage as an energy source. The county is already working with the company Innovative Energy, who built a gas-to-energy facility at the landfill.

Casella officials said they also would use the energy source.

Other incentives in the proposal include a labor agreement keeping the 20 employees working at the site; the option to start earlier than the Jan. 1 target date; free in-county residential recycling, as well as set tipping fees for in-county trash; and a scholarship fund for county residents studying environmental science.

Ontario County could also receive a cash windfall. According to the proposal, Casella will pay the county more than \$17 million up front to lease the facility and another \$18 million or so when the expansion project would be completed next summer. There is also \$2 million annually guaranteed for the duration of the lease and the possibility of collecting a certain percentage of the out-of-county tipping fees.

Founded in 1975, Casella is a non-hazardous solid waste services company that operates 37 solid waste collection businesses, 33 transfer stations, seven landfills and one waste-to-energy facility, primarily in the northeastern United States. The company's annual sales are nearly \$421 million, and its income is almost \$60 million.