

Diana M. Smith

Business Development Director and Municipal Support Team Member

Former Mayor of the Village of Seneca Falls, and Past-President of the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM). As Municipal CEO, authored an on-time, balanced, \$7 Million annual budget. Successfully implemented numerous operational efficiencies which reduced municipal expenditures and resulted in a lower property tax rate.

More than twenty years of experience in state and local government. Thorough understanding of group dynamics and facilitation, negotiation skills, on-target strategic analysis, and effective leadership to foster collaboration and get things done.



Expertise

Governmental Processes and Local Government Operations – Strong familiarity with municipal operations. Extensive experience in budget formulation, execution and analysis. Effective leadership, board facilitation and departmental oversight. Expertise in developing and implementing feasible strategic plans with stakeholder involvement and consensus.

Economic Development – Success in assisting communities and organizations with strategic planning, grant writing, and coordinating collaborative efforts to strengthen and position themselves for optimal growth.

Strategic Planning for Efficiency / Reorganization – Expertise in introspective analysis of municipal services and delivery options to determine actual costs and potential savings. Proven success in optimizing talents/skill-sets of personnel, capitalizing on inter-departmental consolidations, and utilizing equipment and resources to maximize operational efficiency and minimize municipal costs.

Group Facilitation / Powerful Communication – An effective facilitator and communicator, eliciting public response and participation through compelling oral and written communications. A strong ability to create a results-oriented, positive group dynamic, and to foster collaboration among disparate groups. Demonstrable success in facilitating solutions and bringing closure to challenging matters.

Information Management – Proficient in utilizing tools to optimize effective management of information, streamlining workflow, and achieving targeted results in productivity. Successful in utilizing the web as a communication and public response tool.

Education:

B.A., Philosophy, Humanities, Westminster College, 1983

Elected Experience:

Mayor, Village of Seneca Falls, New York (2004-2011)

Trustee (2001-2004)

Professional Affiliations:

Past-President, New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM)

Publications Include:

- "Comprehensive Plans and Your Bottom Line," 2016, Talk of the Towns Magazine (Association of Towns of NYS)
- "Ready to Welcome Growth," 2015, Talk of the Towns Magazine
- "Local Government and Business: Bridging the Gap," Summer 2013, NYCOM Municipal Bulletin

Key Experience

SmarterLocalGov / Strategic Municipal Initiatives Project – Developed an innovative project underwritten by MRB Group, to provide a critically needed focus on implementing efficiency in municipal operations to communities and municipal leaders across the State of New York. Presently continuing to develop the project further, serving as creator/author of program content and implementation tools. Have provided to-date more than 100 presentations, seminars, roundtable discussions, and conference training sessions for regional and state associations. Have developed collaborative relationships and projects with educational institutions like Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center, University of Albany, and SUNY Brockport to contribute to or create instructional content regarding operational efficiency, implementation of best practices, shared services, and restructuring of local government. Recognized by the American Council of Engineering Companies as an innovative concept of achievement and value, the project has been renamed SmarterLocalGov, and has evolved into a new division at MRB Group.

Village of Clyde Municipal Efficiency Analysis – Provided project leadership and co-authorship of an analysis of municipal operations, in order to identify opportunities to implement efficiencies within the local government structure. Also considered was possible restructuring of local government. Annual municipal expenditures were reviewed as well as personnel utilization, equipment and facility use, operational practices, and services provided to residents. A number of options were presented that would increase efficiency or reduce costs, along with anticipated benefits and challenges of implementation.

Town of Waterloo Comprehensive Plan – Provided project leadership and assisted a Town Board-appointed Steering Committee to author a Comprehensive Plan to serve the community as a decision-making tool, a compass for strategic planning, and a resource that strengthens efforts to secure external funding for capital projects. A significant public relations component was required, since the project was completed within a contentious environment involving disputed land uses and the existence of one of the largest landfills in the Northeastern United States. The final plan focused on a feasible future for the community built upon its core values and character, and discussed planning options within the Town's control that could realistically be implemented.

Village of Lyons Dissolution Plan, Analysis & Alternatives, Lyons, NY – Served as Project Team Leader providing support to the Village in its statutory duty to respond to petitions, then passage of a referendum which supported dissolution of the Village government. Worked closely with an appointed committee to develop a process strategy, provide meeting facilitation, and ensure adherence to regulatory requirements. Coordinated high levels of public participation, including effective presentations to communicate complex information. Composed a thorough, understandable, organized and complete draft document that achieved acclaim

from all stakeholders. The plan further outlined opportunities to achieve increased efficiency in municipal services. The final document received an award from the American Council of Engineering Companies in a peer review process.

Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan Training School – As part of an innovative approach to community planning, was selected in a competitive process to serve as Project Manager for a grant-funded Comprehensive Plan Training School. Provided project guidance, planning and authored curriculum for 15 weeks of training classes. Also provided direct classroom training to local municipal officials sharing critical information, planning tools and leading hands-on exercises. The objective was to empower local leaders with the needed skills and to assist with creation of self-directed community comprehensive plans. The end result was completion of two jointly prepared comprehensive plan processes and plan documents, affecting four communities.

Village of Seneca Falls – As Mayor of the Village, served as chief executive and financial officer achieving significant community-building and tax-lowering accomplishments:

- **Implementation of Operational Efficiencies / Fiscal Sustainability** – Reviewed contractual operations and staff contributions to determine optimal methods for delivery of services at the lowest possible cost. Several positions were eliminated. Analysis of one contract revealed an opportunity to achieve \$1.06 Million in savings over a five year period by bringing services in-house.
- **Functional Consolidation and Implementation** – Successfully restructured the organizational management of three departments into one. Transferred provision of Police Dispatch to the County 9-1-1 Center, and effectively eliminated a Village department without loss of services to taxpayers.
- **Comprehensive Planning and Economic Development** – A key initiative, completed the Community Comprehensive Plan in 2008, establishing a long-term vision for the future of Seneca Falls.

As a founding member of the Seneca Falls Local Development Corporation, created a focus on self-sustaining economic development; worked with potential developers to draw attention to Seneca Falls as a worthy investment.

Successfully obtained significant State investment / grants totaling more than \$5 Million, funding capital improvement projects to maintain infrastructure, create community enhancements, and support the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Dissolution of the Village of Seneca Falls** – Responsible for facilitating effective communication between stakeholders to ensure informed community decision-making. Provided financial information and analysis of operations to the Dissolution Committee; facilitated public disclosure of the plan and positions of key stakeholders; and following the public vote, was responsible for effective implementation and securing assistance from State agencies to ensure smooth transition of municipal operations.

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Professional Affiliations:

Seneca Falls Local Development Corporation – Board Member

New York Conference of Mayors – Honorary Member and Supporting Gold Sponsor (Representative), Past President and former Executive Committee Member, as well as frequent presenter at training conferences

Association of Towns of New York – Supporting Silver Sponsor (Representative), and frequent presenter of training programs at locally held workshops and the organization’s annual conference

Community Affiliations:

Women’s Institute for Leadership and Learning – President, Founding Board Member

Pathway Home of the Finger Lakes – Board Member

National Women’s Hall of Fame – Member of Local Organizing Committee for Inductions and Member of the Capital Campaign Committee

Women March Seneca Falls – Member / Volunteer

Lake to Lake Women (formerly Geneva Business & Professional Women) – Member

SMS (Societe’ de Mutuo Soccorso) of Seneca Falls – Auxiliary Member, Newsletter Committee

American Association of University Women, Rochester Chapter – Member

Friends of the National Women’s Historical Park – Member

Seneca Museum of Waterways – Supporting Member

Beverly Animal Shelter – Fundraising Volunteer