

Village turns to Port for senior services

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Residents will be able to take part in programs under joint agreement

The Fredonia Village Board has finalized a shared-services agreement that will allow local residents to participate in programs at the Port Washington Senior Center.

The one-year agreement will start in 2012.

Village trustees heard a pitch from Port Senior Center Director Catherine Kiener last year, and even included funding in this year's budget to support the Port program.

However, trustees did not take a formal vote on an agreement with Port until last month's board meeting.

Fredonia has no senior center. The county-operated senior lunch program is held in the fire department's meeting room.

Village President Chuck Lapicola spoke as a strong advocate for entering into a partnership with the Port senior center.

"I wish we could provide the same level of services and programs here in Fredonia, but we don't have the facilities or funding to operate one on our own. This would make available to our residents programs that are only six minutes away," Lapicola said.

"We discussed this last year and I would like the board to move forward on the agreement. We set money aside but never took action."

Because of the lack of senior programs in Fredonia, Lapicola noted that a half-dozen village residents have joined the Port center.

Although the annual membership fee is only \$40, he said the village would be making a strong statement by agreeing to cover the cost of those memberships.

"Maybe \$40 isn't a lot of money to a lot of us, but it could mean the difference of getting a medication or not for some seniors on fixed incomes," Lapicola said.

Kiener said a formal relationship might make Fredonia residents aware of the options available through Port.

She said statistics show 10% of the village's population is 65 years or older. In Port Washington, Kiener said 25% of the city's population is over 55 — which is the threshold age they use for programs.

The center has nearly 500 members, and offers more than 60 programs throughout the year. Funding comes largely from city taxes, with a partial offset from membership fees.

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“We have become a first resource for local seniors, and especially for their out-of-town children who want to know what services are available,” Kiener said.

This summer, the center moved into a new building which was once the offices of Franklin Energies.

“We have a three-year lease and great space now for programs to grow,” Kiener said.