

JULY 18, 2021

building project. They certainly could subcontract out anything that they were uncertain about. Any outside contractor would do the same. They might have to hire additional personnel since the existing personnel already have plenty of work to do. In addition, the county might have to hire an experienced foreman/construction manager to take charge of county building projects outside of the regular maintenance.

There are two additional benefits to this arrangement. The first is that it would give the maintenance department additional resources and flexibility to handle their normal work. The second is that it would provide local jobs, good local jobs that are currently contracted out to firms from outside the county or state.

Are there risks involved in this? Of course. Possibly some grants are not available. Might not the county workers make mistakes? Yes, they might, but what outside contract does not come without cost overruns or errors found in hindsight. To continue on the tried and true path simply guarantees that we will pay too much and have less control over what we do.

— **Schelling McKinley,**
Westport, New York ■

Response to editorial

To the editor:

I was disappointed to hear that the board of supervisors voted to demolish the Ag Center building and replace it with a new structure. Though many critics have cited the historic value of the building, I am mainly concerned with the cost of this decision. A new structure similar to the nutrition building will cost at least \$1.5 million and will have less square footage than the present building. Having worked as the contractor on the rehabilitation of the Westport Town Hall, I know first-hand that utilization of the existing structure can be cost-effective.

While rehabilitation can be cost-effective using the traditional method of bidding out the entire project (architectural and engineering fees, competitive bids by qualified bidders, adherence to state regulations and requirements for large projects), there is another alternative that is available to the county. The county is able to do the work itself, using the county's own personnel. They have done this in numerous projects in the past as have other municipalities. It can eliminate or reduce architectural and engineering fees, cost of preparing bid documents, architectural supervision, bonding and other insurance costs. Labor cost are paid at the county's existing scale rates and there is no profit premium paid to the successful bidder. All these costs are at least one third of a projects completed cost.

Could the county do this with their existing personnel? They have an existing maintenance department that is responsible for all the county's building and thus has the expertise to handle any

CCE 7/16/2021

To the editor:

With regard to your diplomatic article, "Before bringing the wrecking ball", there are a few additional considerations that need to be pointed out. The building has been deemed structurally sound by a coalition of architects, contractors, and preservationists who have quoted a price of 1.5 million for renovation, less than the quote for a new building. Another consideration is that renovation is the "greenest" way to go. Kindly see the attached letter that I sent to the board of supervisors in May. It is my understanding that a number of supervisors, by their own admission, voted for demolition without having seen the building, a dereliction of duty. Now that some have seen it, one can only hope that they will reconsider the uninformed decision.

— **Simone Stephens, Westport, New York** ■