East Syracuse mayor: Residents cannot afford to be part of new ambulance district

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Elizabeth Doran / The Post-Standard

East Syracuse, NY -- The village of East Syracuse won’t be part of an ambulance district being created in the northern part of DeWitt. Village board members decided against it after a public hearing this week, and no one made a motion to put it up for a vote.

“It just didn’t make any sense,” said East Syracuse Village Mayor Danny Liedka. “Our residents would wind up paying nine times more for the same service they’re getting already, and nothing would change.”

The East Area Volunteer Emergency Services wants DeWitt to create an ambulance district that can tax property owners in the northern section of the town, including the village of East Syracuse.

The DeWitt town board agreed to create the separate ambulance district in the northern part of the town earlier this week, and it will go to a public referendum Nov. 2. But the village of East Syracuse won’t be part of it, as the town and the East Area Volunteer Emergency Services had hoped.

East Syracuse residents pay $2.50 for a home assessed at $100,000 now, and with the new district they would pay $23 for a $100,000 home and receive the exact same service. “We’re a poor village, and we have to protect our residents,” Liedka said. “It wouldn’t accomplish anything, but our people would pay more.”

Vincent Stevenson, president of EAVES, said he’s disappointed the village didn’t let the people decide in a referendum rather than deciding among themselves.

EAVES and town of DeWitt officials said it would have spread the cost for ambulance service out more evenly among the residents in the northern part of DeWitt and the village of East Syracuse.

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