

Board to weigh hiring environmental law specialists

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LEWISTON — The Town Board last night asked the town attorney to find out how much it would cost to hire a Washington-based law firm to represent it in charting the future of hazardous wastes stored at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works.

Town Attorney Benjamin N. Hewitt will contact Dow, Lohnes & Albertson, a law firm which specializes in environmental law, to determine how much they will charge the town to pursue the town supervisor's plan for the storage site. The firm would meet with the federal Department of Energy, which owns the Pletcher Road site, and Bechtel National Inc., which operates the Ordnance Works, to discuss Town Supervisor James J. Lombardi plan. It includes getting a minimum \$250,000 annual in-lieu-of-property-tax payments retroactive for five years.

"Why spend more money to fight the issue when the decisions have already been made," he said. "The town should be reimbursed for the pain and suffering that we experience because the site is here."

The plan also calls for containment of all hazardous wastes for eventual removal.

Lombardi has also proposed that the federal government give its assurance that the site never will become a regional depository if wastes are to remain there. He also wants assurance that the latest available technology would be used and a complete federal financing program be instituted for handling the waste.

In other business:

- The board in a 3-2 vote approved a recommendation by Councilman Robert Lee to hire Hibbard Engineers of Niagara Falls at a \$3,650 cost to draw up specifications for a new phone system in the town departments.

Lee said it's important to have a firm outside the telephone industry to prepare specifications for bidding. "The phone system is outdated, but there is a lot of money involved in replacing the system," he said. "I just don't see any other way of bidding."

The board also entered into a \$3,500 contract with Krehbiel Associates Inc. to study the Hoover Road bridge, which is presently closed, to determine the capacity of the structure and a possible method of increasing capacity.