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Sherman in discussion to put in solar array

By David Prenatt

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SHERMAN – Even as the Village of Sherman upgrades its sewer and water facilities, it is also looking for alternative ways to provide electricity for those facilities.

To that end, the Village is currently involved in an "option to lease agreement" with Solar Liberty with the intention of creating a solar array in the Sherman area.

"Increased concern in utility costs at the Village of Sherman Wastewater Treatment Plant elevated the need for alternative energy solutions," said Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder. "Essentially, the Village of Sherman and Solar Liberty are looking to build community solar arrays, bringing benefits to the community. The Village arrays are directly connected to the grid without any battery storage."

Although the project is still very much at the preliminary stages, the Village is under contract with two property owners to purchase land for the solar array. If the solar array becomes a reality, the Village will own the land and lease the property to Solar Liberty.

The solar array project fits into the Village comprehensive plan as part of Sherman's commitment to being a Climate Smart community. "It's an unusual position the Village of Sherman finds itself in, being at the forefront of something like energy production and environmental conservation, which will benefit the residences and businesses for decades to come," Meeder said. "I'm thankful for the vision and enthusiasm of the board of trustees."

Other benefits from a solar array project would be to build a "more stable and sustainable infrastructure system that supports the health, welfare and economic growth opportunities for the Sherman community," Meeder said. "The electrical utility savings at the WWTP is only the beginning. Next we will be discussing the utility costs related to our water pump system, street lights, municipal-owned buildings and more."