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Sherman solar project gets tax breaks, Busti under consideration

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A solar project in Sherman has gotten final approval for tax breaks, while a project in Busti is under consideration.

During the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency meeting, board members approved a Payment In Lieu of Taxes agreement to Solar Liberty Sherman, LLC and Solar Liberty Sherman II, LLC. The two solar projects sit next to one another and one of them is on village property.

The two solar projects combined are 9.625 megawatts and are proposed for 176 and 191 W. Main St. They will be constructed on 34 acres of land. According to the IDA, 17% of the projects are located in the village of Sherman and the remaining 83% will be placed in the town.

Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder was in attendance at the May IDA meeting and discussed the proposal.

She said unlike many solar projects which benefit a single land owner renting space, this one will benefit all residents, because it's going on public property.

Meeder said the arrays are going on property where the village's wastewater treatment plant is at. It's also close to French Creek, so they did a lot of investigating to make sure the solar panels would not create any environmental hazards.

She also said the property will continue to be used for agricultural purposes. There's seed mixture plans, plans for grazing, and beekeeping will also take place.

Meeder said the lease money will be used to support water and sewer projects, as there are only 300 residents who currently have sewer and water.

Meeder also said once the contract is in place, they're going to negotiate for lower electric costs for both residents and businesses.

The IDA Board of Directors unanimously approved the PILOT agreements.

BUSTI SOLAR PROJECT

The county IDA also heard about a 10 megawatt solar project in the town of Busti, adjacent to Cummins Jamestown Engine Plant.

The project is expected to cost \$17,608,000 to construct. Like the Sherman project, it is actually divided up into two separate solar arrays.

The developer is seeking a Payment In Lieu Of Taxes agreement. If approved, they want to start construction by the fall and be completed by next year.

Dennis Ryan, a developer for the project, joined the IDA meeting via speaker phone and discussed the development.

He said they've been working on this solar project since 2018.