

I spoke to John Loffredo, Commissioner of Erie County Department of Public Works and Andy Sedita, Commissioner of Erie County Parks regarding consolidation of their departments and received the following comments:

Commissioner Loffredo thought that there could be some cost savings for using Parks personnel on a seasonal basis, i.e. during the winter when the Parks workers aren't as busy and Public Works personnel are plowing snow. However, both departments have made cost-saving changes to address the seasonal nature of their work while maintaining services at the same time, making labor pooling academic.

Public Works instituted one-person plows last winter. Instead of two people operating plows, one driving and one operating a wing plow on the passenger side, they have moved the controls to the center; so, the driver can operate both plows.

The Parks Department has hired LPT's or long-term part-time workers that they employ 39 hours per week during their busy summer season. Their time is cut back to 20 hours per week during the rest of the year when, historically, they could have been available for helping to plow.

Also, Commissioner Loffredo said that he had undergone 43% cuts to his building maintenance staff and felt that picking up Parks would only add building repair jobs to an already overburdened staff.

With the labor pooling issue addressed, Commissioner Sedita felt that there really weren't other substantial cost saving ideas that would justify consolidating departments.

I also spoke to Joe Giambra, City of Buffalo Public Works Commissioner. A few years ago, Joe added the Streets and Parks Departments to Public Works. He said that although there was a little more flexibility in moving personnel around, he didn't feel that it saved much money.