



PRESS RELEASE

Village of Bartlett

For more information, contact Gabrielle Infusino, 630-837-0800, ext 5912

September 23, 2005

Bartlett Confident its Study is Accurate

After reviewing the U-46-commissioned analysis of Bartlett's 2004 disconnection study, the Village stands firmly behind its report. According to Bartlett officials, it is the recently released KPMG analysis that is fraught with mismatched information and lacking in credibility. KPMG drew conclusions about the validity of Bartlett's financial figures without providing new numbers to backup those conclusions.

"The Village of Bartlett has always tried to steer the middle course, to be conservative in our financial assumptions," said Village Finance Director Kathy Booth. "We picked a snapshot in time and lined up all the pieces. We feel that the end result was a reasonable estimate of the incremental costs to form a new district."

Bartlett contends the KPMG study simply retreads old ground and does nothing to advance the path of education in the district. According to Booth, U-46 did not come up with a revised set of financial numbers in its analysis. Instead, they had KPMG critique the assumptions the Village used in evaluating the financial impact of forming a new school district by stacking them against their own criteria. However, if you start with a different set of assumptions, your conclusions will be different.

Furthermore, KPMG failed to consider that a year's time had elapsed since Bartlett released its report. The consulting firm pulled individual pieces of data out of the context of a fixed point in time and, in many cases, evaluated it against information that has since changed. For example, KPMG suggested that Bartlett's analysis did not fully consider the impact pension reforms would have on faculty recruitment, but the pension reforms KPMG referred to were not enacted by Springfield until this past spring.

The KPMG report also stated that Bartlett overlooked certain costs for the new school district, such as anticipated facility maintenance costs. Booth argues that Bartlett's financial study was designed to look specifically at the incremental costs that would increase or decrease if a new district were formed. Facilities maintenance costs would be incurred, whether or not there is a district separation.

In some cases, statements made in the KPMG report are simply wrong. For instance, KPMG questioned Bartlett's math when calculating the property tax impact on a \$200,000 home, but they failed to include the homestead exemption in their own figures. In addition, U-46 never asked for clarification of Bartlett's information, which the Village would have been happy to provide.

"The question was how much will it cost for a new district," said Bartlett Village President Catherine Melchert. "Of course, we want our numbers to be as valid as they can be. But the numbers have changed and they will continue to change."

"We know it will cost us to get out. But how much will it cost us to stay in?" Melchert added. "When all is said and done, the question we should be asking is, can we afford not to make improvements to our children's education?"