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Kaneland towns agree to set common impact fees

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By Linda Girardi Special to the Beacon News

Communities in the Kaneland School District have reached an intergovernmental agreement establishing "school impact payments" on future annexations to defray the cost of educating and housing students.

"This is probably the first agreement of its kind and scope," Kaneland Assistant Superintendent Tom Runty said.

The intergovernmental agreement, authorized by the Village Boards in six out of seven communities within the district (Elburn, Virgil, Maple Park, Kaneville, Montgomery and Cortland), combines the existing capital developer impact fees with the concept of an operational impact fee.

The village of Sugar Grove, the last of the villages to authorize the agreement, was expected to do so Tuesday night, Runty said.

The net result would be "school impact payments" that will be applied on housing developments of future annexations.

"In the past we had written fees tables, but no written agreement and commitment that all villages would apply those fees," Kaneland Superintendent Charles McCormick said.

Since 1989, the School District has collected capital development impact fees to address the costs associated with residential growth. But it has never had a mechanism to cover the operating side of educating students.

Runty said it costs the district more than \$9,000 to educate a student per year, and that 10 to 21 months pass before property tax revenue arrives after a family with children moves in.

The intergovernmental agreement sets school impact payments based on housing types and home values, with an incremental schedule to be phased in over the next three years. The fee averages \$9,300 to \$10,000 on a four-bedroom home with a fair market value of \$300,000.

The agreement further states that when a new subdivision within the unincorporated areas is proposed, the district will make a "documented and persistent attempt" to obtain the payments consistent with the agreement.

School officials said the final version of the agreement was reached in March, and subsequently school officials began meeting with the villages' administrators, managers and planners. A formal signing is planned for later this month.

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