

Windsor proceeds with incorporation

Resolution states town board does not wish to pursue DeForest merger

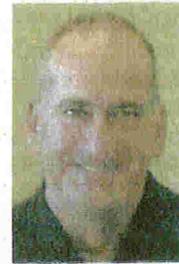
By Joe Pruski and Jake Kurtz
DeForest Times-Tribune

After months of discussion and speculation over the governmental structure of the Town of Windsor, supervisors took their first official step on the path toward incorporation.

The town board unanimously passed a resolution stating that it will "proceed with continued due diligence to incorporate the Town, but only if the entire Town is able to incorporate as a village."

The action came after a closed session discussion at the Jan. 15 board meeting.

"It's the culmination of a year-long study of looking at our structure, and it's the next logical step in that



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Town Board Chair

process," town Chairman Bob Wipperfurth said in an interview Monday.

The town board was directed by residents to continue to pursue the possibility of incorporation during an electors meeting on Nov. 25.

"This (resolution) is letting everyone know that we're proceeding and we're planning," Wipperfurth said.

The resolution states that the town "does not wish to pursue merger or consolidation with the Village of DeForest," but it does wish to reserve the option for consideration "in the

future."

The resolution also references a report by the firm Ehlers & Associates, which was hired last summer to review the financial implications of a merger with DeForest or incorporation. The report said the Village of DeForest and City of Sun Prairie in the last 25 years has annexed 2,209 acres worth of ground from Windsor that today has a valuation of roughly \$290 million.

Ehlers also reported that if DeForest and Windsor were to become one, an estimated \$1.5 million in expenses or levy would need to be cut in order for Windsor residents to not see a tax increase.

There are two paths toward incorporation the town can follow. The first involves a \$25,000 application to the Wisconsin Department of the Administration (DOA) and a decision by the Municipal Boundary Review Section. The DOA has been hesitant to grant incorporation to towns with

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large swaths of farmland, though Wipperfurth views Windsor's farmland as its "business park."

The second option is by a direct act of the legislature, which would involve lobbying a majority in the state

senate and assembly. Wipperfurth said that he has spoken with a "few" members of the legislature, but that "it's too early on in the process to gauge support."

"We're still exploring the merits of each option, both the benefits and negatives of each process, and what the best way to proceed is," Wipperfurth said.