

Godfrey takes next steps in abolishing township

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY - The Village of Godfrey was founded 26 years ago using the borders of the Godfrey Township, but soon that township could be abolished.

At last night's meeting of the Godfrey Village Council, Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick was able to secure permission from his board to place the abolition of the

current Godfrey Township on either the upcoming spring 2018 primary ballot or the fall 2018 general election ballot. Currently, the Godfrey Township manages the assessor's office, which is open seven hours a day, five days a week, and manages public aid as well, through an office open four hours a day, five days a week. McCormick said the township represents an "unnecessary layer of government" for the people of Godfrey.

Recent legislation, which was signed by Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner after passing both houses of the Illinois General Assembly, allows counties to abolish townships, but not municipalities. McCormick said he spoke with Illinois Municipal League Executive Director Brad Cole about how Godfrey's township could be dissolved. Cole told McCormick it must be taken to a public ballot.

If such a measure passes either next spring or fall, Godfrey Township would be absorbed by the Village of Godfrey. McCormick said this would save taxpayers money by ridding them of at least two salaries as well as the extra expenses incurred by an additional layer of government. Both the Godfrey Assessor and Godfrey Township Supervisor were elected in 2017, however, so they would be allowed to finish the remaining three and a half years of their terms before their positions, and ultimately the township, could be abolished.

"To my understanding, we have very few people who come through the Village of Godfrey with public aid," McCormick said. "Our actual savings will have to be determined through our accountant, and we will have an exact number by the time we reach the polls. At least one or two salaries plus the expenses from having an additional level of government operations will be saved."