

# Village of Clarendon Hills

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## Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Village Board Discusses Home Rule Referendum Question**

At its meeting Monday night, the Village Board discussed placing a referendum on an upcoming ballot seeking Home Rule status for the Village. The Village is currently considering home rule as a way to maintain funding for the Village's infrastructure program, while also ensuring the long-term financial viability of the Village.

For the past several years, the Village Board has examined ways to improve the Village's long-term financial strength. Following several years of budget cuts and stagnant revenues, the Board appointed a committee to study whether home rule was an appropriate option for Clarendon Hills. Home rule grants municipalities additional flexibility to solve local problems, including flexibility with fees, taxes and procedural issues. In Illinois, municipalities with more than 25,000 people automatically receive home rule status while other municipalities can seek home rule through a referendum.

The Home Rule Research Committee was appointed in April and tasked with studying home rule and making a recommendation to the Village Board on whether home rule was appropriate for Clarendon Hills, and if so, what home rule authority the Village should utilize. If the Committee did not find home rule appropriate for Clarendon Hills, it was asked to examine what alternatives the Village should pursue in lieu of home rule. The Committee was made up of 10 community volunteers and two Village Board members. The Home Rule Research Committee recently concluded its research and voted 10 to 2 recommending home rule as appropriate for the Village of Clarendon Hills. The Committee voted 9 to 3 to recommend approval of the use of home rule to increase revenue through property taxes and 11 to 1 to recommend raising revenues through non-property tax measures allowed under home rule, such as a home rule sales tax.

The Village Board is currently evaluating using home rule to maintain funding of the Village's capital program, including the Village's ongoing Road Improvement Program. Currently, the Village funds the road program with special service areas. Special service areas spread a portion of the cost of the construction among the property owners in that area. If the Village received home rule status, it would eliminate the SSAs and establish a road improvement property tax. A general property tax allows the Village to tax properties located on non-Village streets, such as the commercial properties on Ogden Avenue and 55<sup>th</sup> Street, and reduce the cost of administering the program. Under the current proposal, the Village will have available other revenues, such as a home rule sales tax and a demolition tax, to ensure the Village has resources to sustain necessary community services provided for in the Village's General Fund for years to come.

The Village of Clarendon Hills has a long-history of fiscal responsibility, recently earning a AAA bond rating from Standard and Poor's. The Village has sought innovative ways to reduce costs, including a shared services agreement between the Clarendon Hills and Hinsdale Fire Departments and opportunities to contract for services at a lower cost, and it continues to seek such opportunities. The Village has maintained lean staffing levels while demanding a high quality of work from its employees. The Village's number of full-time equivalent employees is 35.9 this year, compared to 36 in 1992, despite a 15 percent increase in population.

If the Village Board does not pursue or obtain home rule status, it would likely seek a property tax increase. Home rule offers revenue options beyond property tax increases, which would allow the Village to seek a lower property tax increases in the future than would otherwise be the case.

The Village will host its first information community meeting at 7 p.m. on November 2 at Prospect School. The Village will hold additional community meetings for residents to learn more about the Village's financial condition, home rule and its potential impacts, and to provide their feedback to the Village Board. Residents will then be asked to vote on whether the Village should received home rule during an upcoming election. Residents can also learn more about home rule and stay up to date on community meeting dates by checking the Village's website, [www.clarendonhills.us/homerule.cfm](http://www.clarendonhills.us/homerule.cfm), and through the Village's e-mail newsletter. You can also stay up to date on Village news through Facebook and Twitter (@VillageofCH).