

Credit River Township Position Statement, Form of Government, August 2011

For the past three years, the Credit River Township Board has considered possible changes in its form of government. Late in 2008, the board commissioned Ehlers Incorporated to complete a Fiscal Impact Study, an analysis of the projected financial impact of governing options for Credit River. The options considered included:

1. Incorporate as a City.
2. Remain as a Township with the possibility of piecemeal annexation of certain portions of the Township by neighboring communities.
3. Negotiate an agreement with the City of Savage to annex all property north of County Road 21, with the southern portion remaining a much smaller Township.

Ehlers presented its findings to the board in spring 2009, with an open house for public comment in May 2009. Residents offered many suggestions, but what was voiced consistently was:

- Keep Credit River area as it is now
- Satisfaction with level of government services provided
- Keep taxes low
- Control growth where possible
- Benefiting property owners should be responsible for any city utilities costs

Board discussion continued over the summer and by fall 2009, a decision was made to identify and hire an experienced facilitator to help the board fully understand the options and to come to a conclusion. Dean Johnson of Resource Strategies worked with the board over the winter, and while discussion pointed toward not incorporating, the question regarding the eventual need for sewer and possibly municipal water services in the northwest portion of the Township continued to be of concern. Johnson challenged the board to consider if the Township could coordinate sewer service in the northwest portion of the Township when needed, which resulted in the signing of a joint powers agreement with the City of Savage in 2010.

The JPA establishes public utility service and long range planning provisions in northwest Credit River should the need arise, with the agreement that Savage will not initiate annexation of property in the JPA area.

As part of the JPA, both communities developed a feasibility study. Credit River's study, completed earlier this year, provided a detailed engineering plan for utility services in the Creekwood, Country Court and Casey's Addition areas when services would become necessary. This Township-owned system would connect to the Savage sewer system, which is being extended to the Credit River/Savage border near County Roads 44 and 27.

Another step taken by the board to keep Credit River's boundaries intact is the 2009 joint powers agreement with the City of Savage that averted 200 acres of prime development land in the northwestern corner of the Township from being annexed. The City of Savage provides planning and zoning services for the land owned by the Pearson Family/Prior Lake Aggregates which will be mined and eventually reclaimed and developed.

With the two JPA's in place and the Sewer Service Area plan completed, the board's position at this time is to continue with the current form of government, while staying abreast of situations that would necessitate a re-assessment of the above-mentioned options.