

Hinsdale utility heads to ballot

By Seth Ufheil
Staff writer

Voters will decide whether Hinsdale is on the path to become an electrical utility, after the Village Board decided Tuesday to put the initiative on the April ballot.

Five trustees cleared the way for the village to ask voters in an advisory referendum whether they favor a village-owned electrical service.

What it means

Voters will be asked in an advisory referendum question this April to give Hinsdale permission to form its own electrical utility. If successful this spring, a future binding referendum measure will ask voters to agree to fund the cost to establish the utility.

Village officials began exploring last year whether to replace provider Commonwealth Edison, whose service reliability in town and expected rate hike has drawn criticism.

In 2005, residents experienced power outages at a rate four times greater than ComEd's system-wide average.

Additionally, ComEd's 10-year rate freeze ends this year, meaning customers can expect their power bills to spike more than 20 percent. With Hinsdale in charge of purchasing and distributing power, though, residents' bills might not be dramatically lower than they are now, said Village Manager Dave Cook.

Instead, savings earned by the village could be used to make an estimated \$40 million in infrastructure improvements over the next decade, Cook said.