

**CHANNAHON VILLAGE BOARD
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
PUBLIC INFORMATION FORUM
JANUARY 11, 2022**

Village President Missey Moorman Schumacher called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call was taken with Trustees Greco, Perinar, Scaggs and Slocum present.

Also present were Village Administrator Thomas Durkin, Director of Community Development and Information Systems Mike Petrick, Finance Director Heather Wagonblott, Director of Public Works Ed Dolezal, Village Attorney David Silverman and Village Clerk Kristin Hall.

VP Moorman Schumacher informed everyone present that this public information forum posting on our Village website. She stated that the recording is intended to provide information for members of the public that could not be in attendance this evening. She also stated that it is important that the meeting be conducted smoothly and with a level of decorum, so that all interested parties are able to fully hear and understand, as best as possible, the information being presented. She further stated that as such, we ask the Board Members and staff to please utilize your microphones when speaking. She stated to the public, please wait until the question and answer portion of the agenda to provide comments or questions and use the podium and microphone, so that you will be able to be heard on the recording. She also stated do not speak over each other or interrupt others while they are speaking because we would like a clean recording to post on our website so that everyone who would like this information is able to receive it.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Discussion – Alternative Water Supply

a. Presentation by Strand Associates, Inc.

Chris Ulm, from Strand Associates, introduced himself to the public and gave a presentation on the current water supply source, why an alternative water source is necessary, the neighboring community investigations and studies, the details of the alternatives that the Village of Channahon investigated and the cost comparison feasibility analysis.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that she wanted to take a couple of minutes, from the perspective of an elected official, about the aquifer going dry. She stated that we could hope that we should have plenty of water and do nothing, but that is not the case. She further stated that as Mr. Ulm explained there is a difference between the shallow water aquifers and the deep water aquifers. She stated that as elected officials, we have to make decisions based on the information we have available. She also stated that we rely on the trained and educated professionals who provide us with this information; and that information is saying that even with City of Joliet coming off the aquifer, it is not replenishing quickly enough to maintain the level that we need long-term. She further stated that we are using, currently and in future estimates, almost to 2 - 7 million gallons per day, by ourselves, at build out. She stated that if other communities were to stay on the aquifer as well, there would be no way that the aquifer would be able to supply enough water for all of us. She also stated that what it really comes down to for us, as an elected

body, is we have a couple of options that both come with a price tag. She further stated that she doesn't want people to think that staying on the current water system that we have doesn't come with a cost; that is not a free option. She stated that our water bills go up because there is a system to maintain and no matter what option we choose there is a price tag that goes along with that. She also stated that as far as the Regional Water Commission, we have spent the last two years negotiating what that legislation would look like so whoever gets into that Regional Water Commission is fairly represented. She further stated that it's not City of Joliet as the big player in this and they are running the Regional Water Commission; the Commission was specifically set up so that whatever community, no matter what size, would have an equal vote. She stated that if we decided to stay on the shallow and deep wells, our residents on the east side of I-55 are currently served by the City of Joliet. She also stated that the water system over there would need improvements and an allocation would need to be secured from the IDNR. She further stated that the Illinois River option studied buys us less time than we may think it does. Even if we determine the aquifer could sustain us until 2050, you cannot just turn and have a new water source. She stated that there are a number of things get us prepared for that, so in 10-12 additional years we are still going to need begin the process of improvements for a new source. If we don't go with the Regional Water Commission, we will have to do it on our own if the other communities considering joining the commission decide to join. She also stated that from all of the models, the Illinois River option is a more expensive option as we would have to build our own water treatment plant and meet the ever-increasing regulations and requirements set by the EPA for water treatment, as well as hire staff. She further stated that there comes a point in time, around 2050, that the cost breaks even and it is actually more expensive to pump and treat our own water from the Illinois River, than if we choose to join the Regional Water Commission. She stated that we have an enormous amount of information and she doesn't want anyone to think this was a quick study. We have been talking about this since 2019, so this is been going on for several years. She also stated that we have a huge decision to make and our jobs as elected officials is to look at the available information that is presented to us by educated professionals and the scientific methods and look at the big picture to find what is in the long-term best interest of this community. She further stated that she hopes we are all here in 2050, but it's our kids and our grandkids and we have to make sure they have sustainable, clean drinking water. She stated that she has said this to the Board on many occasions - this is a very big decision we have to make and the price tag is big no matter which way we decide to go. She also stated that all of this Village Board members live here too; any decision that we make, affects us that same way it affects everyone else. She further stated that Mr. Ulm, our engineer, is also a resident and has a vested interest in this too. She stated that we wanted this information to be available to as many residents as possible and offer time for the public to ask questions and offer comments tonight, so she thanks everyone for coming tonight.

Mr. Ulm continued his presentation going through the timeline for joining the Regional Water Commission and the cost comparison feasibility analysis.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that the approval of Regional Water Commission agreement that is an opportunity to get into the Regional Water Commission and that opportunity will expire. She stated that once all of the communities that get in for the 2030 date, we don't have the option of getting in that Regional Water Commission as work will need to begin fairly immediately to meet the 2030 date. She also stated that even if we decide not to go with the Regional Water Commission we still need to get a water allocation for the residents on the east side of I-55 and do the corrosion study, unless we decide to service them ourselves.

b. Question and Answer Session

Kurt Benda, resident of Channahon, asked what improvements would need to be done to the existing water system.

Mr. Ulm stated if we join the Regional Water Commission, there is a requirement that we have two days' worth of average daily usage in storage, so additional storage tanks would be added. He also stated that the majority of the improvements is in the water mains in the ground to transmit the water.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that if you think of questions later, you are welcome to come to our next Public Information Forum on Thursday, January 13th or email us. She stated that on our website there will be a frequently asked questions segment, so we will put any questions that we get out there as well.

Joe Mikolic, resident of Channahon, asked how much water are we going to be allocated and can that allocation go up or will there be a limited amount of water that the Village of Channahon will have access to.

Mr. Ulm stated the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is the body that regulates allocations. He stated the allocation is based on projected average daily demand and yes it increases. He also stated that they give you a 20-year allocation and after 10 years they review it to make sure you are on track. He further stated that they don't want to give more allocation than people need, so they can spread this resource out to as many communities as possible. He stated that they do not want to regulate growth, and they work with communities to allow for a major user.

Mr. Mikolic asked if there is some sort of catastrophic failure to the system, is the Village of Channahon able to utilize the well pumps to use that water or will it be illegal for us to use ground water.

Mr. Ulm stated the Village of Channahon will keep the wells that they have as a standby. He stated that you cannot use both sources at the same time. He also stated that is another reason why there is two times the amount of daily use required to be in storage. He further stated that having that much storage allows the City of Chicago or the Regional Water Commission to do a quick operation that may shut the system down for a couple of hours and come back on. He stated that if there is a major catastrophic event, it allows time to get your wells ready to be turned back on. He also stated that the wells will remain as backup for those emergencies.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that the reason this is such a major decision is the very big price tag. She stated that Trustee Greco has asked that we share the total cost for Lake Michigan Water and the cost of building our own water treatment plant.

Mr. Ulm stated that keep in mind, some of these costs through the Regional Water Commission are spread out of 25-30 year loans.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that these costs were figured in to determine the cost comparison feasibility analysis. She stated that the reason the rates are what they are is because they figured in these costs.

Mr. Ulm stated that in 2020 dollars, the Capital Cost associated with connecting to the Regional Water Commission for Lake Michigan Water, is \$75.6 million dollars. He stated that to build a water treatment plant and do all of the improvements for the Illinois River option, the Capital Cost would be \$85.3 million dollars.

Trustee Slocum stated that if we get the water from Lake Michigan, is there any maintenance that we have to do here. He stated that there is a \$10 million dollar difference and a lot of that has to do with treating the water ourselves.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that the \$10 million dollar difference is just Capital Cost, that doesn't include costs for treating the water.

Mr. Ulm stated the cost to operate an Illinois River water treatment plant is more than the Village's entire budget right now, alone. He stated that so you would see significant cost increases with the water treatment plant. He also stated that with Lake Michigan, you would no longer have to pump the water from 1,800 feet below ground, so certainly electricity costs would go down. He further stated that you will still have some pumping stations and some additional storage tanks that you would have to do maintenance on, but your chemical usage should drop significantly. He stated that you should only have to add a little bit of chlorine to disinfect.

Trustee Greco asked if we have determined what each household would pay to tap on.

Dolezal stated yes, included in these numbers and analysis, had a tap on fee of \$3,500. He stated that the reason that it was \$3,500 is that was the number that the commission was considering imposing across the board. He also stated that our current connection for water is higher and is around \$4,200, and increases per ordinance by 3%, every year. He further stated that it is for new construction or new connections to the system. He stated that if you are already connected to the system, there is no charge.

Durkin stated that late this afternoon we received the final draft of the 140 page preliminary agreement that will be up for board consideration in February. He stated that he will distribute it to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Perinar made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. Seconded by Trustee Greco.
VERBAL ROLL CALL: ALL AYES **MOTION CARRIED**

Submitted by
Kristin Hall
Village Clerk

