

**Twin Lakes Township Water Distribution System Project  
Special Board Meeting and Public Improvement Hearing  
Friday, March 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.  
Four Seasons Event Center, Carlton, MN**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Diane Felde-Finke at 6:30 p.m. Felde-Finke introduced Supervisors John Vernon and Randy Willie, Clerk Sue Chapin, Town Attorney Troy Gilchrist, Engineer Susan Wojtkiewicz with Donohue, Engineers David Bolf and Tom DesMarais with Northern Consulting Engineers (NCE), and Derek Wolf with the City of Carlton.

Gilchrist gave an overview of the agenda for tonight's meeting and hearing.

**Project Background:**

Gilchrist presented an overview of the history of the project, and how the town and the city have been working to get funding. Last fall the project received \$7.5 million in the state bonding bill. The city and town formed a joint powers agreement many years ago to extend water out into the township. A project of this size involves a lot of moving parts - engineers, attorneys, and financial people doing the number crunching to take care of the gap in funding after the \$7.5 million. There are strict restrictions on that state funding. We're still at the initial stage - bids are being sought, and we don't know what the ultimate costs of the project are until we know what the bids come in at. There will be another hearing in the future at which financial aspects of the project will be presented. Any numbers are not written in stone at this point.

**Project Overview:**

Wojtkiewicz gave a general overview of the purpose of the project, which is to deliver water from the City of Carlton through a new water utility owned by the township. Components include water main and services to the ROW. Because of the funding restrictions it won't pay for the connection from the ROW to private homes and businesses. The water line will start at the City of Carlton and go west all the way to Schmitz Road, connecting the Olsonville properties and Heidelberg Drive area. The project includes hydrants, restoration of ground surface, and the construction of a metering station within the City of Carlton and a booster station located on the west side of I35. The project has been a long time in the works. The city's water tower was built with capacity to provide water to the township. The city also put in a new well and built a new water treatment plant.

**Construction Inspection:**

Bolf said that NCE has been hired to do the construction inspection and oversight. There will be a full-time on-site inspector to ensure that the line gets built as per the plan and design. That inspector, Wolf, or Willie will be the go-to people for any questions as construction goes along. There are likely to be weekly construction meetings to give

updates on the construction and give people an opportunity to ask questions. The goal is an open channel of communication, and if someone can't attend a meeting they can send questions ahead of time, which will then be addressed at a meeting. Wojtkiewicz mentioned that since Donohue is not located in this area, NCE will be the "boots on the ground" for the project.

Gilchrist explained the purpose, rules, and process of the Public Hearing. The town is looking at bonding somewhere around \$1.26 million. This evening is the first of two hearings required for this process. The first hearing tonight is the Improvement Hearing, and the focus is to talk about the scope of the project – who is going to be served. The second hearing is the Assessment Hearing, which will likely be held later in the summer. Another notice will be sent about that hearing. The lion's share of the project is being paid for by the state, which helps make it more affordable. Tentative numbers at this point, based on current estimates, are for assessments of \$4,000 per home, spread out over 20 years with an interest rate of 3.5%, which comes out to \$281 a year. The township is working on a potential deferment for vacant lots.

The Public Hearing was opened by Felde-Finke.

Question: Where are the hydrants going to go (concern about county plowing)?

Answer: A lot of thought has gone into where things will be located, but it's subject to change once construction begins.

Question: Is there a rough idea of when the project will start?

Answer: The bids are due on March 19, which the board will consider at their first meeting in April, and construction could start the first part of June. We are allowing for two construction seasons, possibly to the casino the first year, and Olsonville/Schmitz Road the second year, but it will all depend on the contractor.

Question: Will we be required to hook up to the new system if we have an existing well?

Answer: Yes, that will be part of the ordinance, and is typical. It will be up to the property owner to build the service lateral.

Question: Will it be Carlton water?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What will monthly charges be?

Answer: Water usage will be metered with a fixed base charge. For residential properties, current estimates have the fixed rate charge at \$12.40, and usage based on an average of 3,000 gallons a month comes to \$20.85, with a total estimated monthly water bill of \$33.25. The monthly base charge won't be charged on undeveloped lots.

Question: What if the vacant lot cannot be developed?

Answer: Situations like that will be looked at individually.

Question: How does the private connection work?

Answer: It's up to the individual property owner to connect to the system. The property owner hires a contractor to run the line from the ROW to the house. There are a lot of local contractors that do that type of work, and a list of those will be provided at that point. The township is looking at possible funding sources to help pay for private connections, and the township will be providing water meters.

Question: What about well abandonment?

Answer: The Minnesota Department of Health provides grants for that, and other funding sources are being explored.

Question: If you've got a well you're using right now for watering, can you keep that well for that purpose?

Answer: It will be dictated by the ordinance, which is still being worked on, but it will be taken into consideration. There is precedence in other communities that, as long as potable water is certified as being disconnected, it is allowed.

Question: Do we anticipate the water quality being the same as the city of Carlton, and will we need a water softener?

Answer: It will depend on what your preference is; some city residents have a softener, some don't. The city is very happy with the quality of water coming out of the new treatment plant, which was completed October 2019. Operationally, the city will be providing maintenance for the township line.

Felde-Finke closed the public hearing. Gilchrist thanked everyone for coming out and reminded attendees to watch their mail for the notice of the Assessment Hearing.

**MOTION to adjourn was made by Felde-Finke and seconded by Vernon; all voted yes, the motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Chapin, Clerk

Diane Felde-Finke, Board Chair