

**Twin Lakes Township Water Distribution System Project
Public Hearing
Thursday, February 15, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.
Carlton County Transportation Building**

Those present are listed on the sign-in pages attached, which are a part of these official minutes.

Donohue engineer Tim Korby welcomed everyone, and he introduced engineer Ashley Hammerbeck, Carlton Mayor Kitty Bureau, Twin Lakes Township Supervisor Randy Willie, Carlton Public Works Superintendent Derek Wolf, and Twin Lakes Township Clerk Sue Chapin.

Korby gave a timeline history of the project. The design for the water distribution system is currently sitting at about 50% completion. Five different funding sources have been looked at. Two of them have said they have no money – Corps of Engineers and Small Cities. The other remaining sources are the state's Public Financing Authority, USDA's Rural Development, and the state legislature. Korby encouraged residents to contact their state representatives, Tony Lourey and Mike Sundin, emphasizing the need for a water line for economic development, water quality, and water quantity.

Willie explained that being at 50% design means that most of the borings are done, and the construction plan shows alignment and layout. The project is on hold right now because of the lack of funding. While the project has been driven somewhat by arsenic issues, the issues focused on now are economic development, water quality, and water quantity. There is a lot interest by businesses in the Highway 210 corridor area, but the lack of good, plentiful water causes them to lose interest. Existing businesses are struggling to have enough water, including the Americinn, which has seven wells, and still needs to truck in water for their swimming pool. Kwik Trip has two wells, and Spirits Restaurant has to serve bottled water because of the poor quality of their water.

Members of the Joint Powers Board met with Tony Lourey and Mike Sundin last week to discuss the project. The suggestion at that meeting was to bring on a lobbyist, to introduce the bill to as many people as possible. A lobbyist that has worked for FDL has been recommended. Again, people attending tonight's meeting were encouraged to contact their legislators. The project will not happen if the funding is not there, and we need grant money to make the project affordable for residents. Willie stated that Carlton County and this area do not ask for much from the legislature, and a lot of money goes to projects in other parts of the state. Willie emphasized all of the entities that have come together to try to make the project happen; the Township, the City of Carlton, Carlton County, and Fond du Lac. There are state facilities that will be affected,

including the state garage on Highway 210, and Jay Cooke State Park, which currently gets its water from the City of Carlton. There is a huge amount of support for the project, and almost no opposition.

Wolf talked about the water samples he obtained in the service area, and described various testing results and how bad water quality was found in several locations.

Hammerbeck presented information on the project. The options that have been looked at are: doing nothing, getting water from the City of Cloquet, or a stand-alone Township system. None of those options were feasible, and so a Joint Powers Board was formed between the City of Carlton and Twin Lakes Township to provide water to the proposed service area.

The City is working on plans for a new water treatment plant, supply well, and improvements in the city to get the water out to the township. The improvements that are needed because of the Township water line will be a bid alternative. They are being designed as part of the City's project, but will get built only if the Township project moves forward. The service area covers the Highway 210 corridor, the land Carlton County owns and wants to develop, Olsonville, and the County Transportation Building. A booster station is planned, around the Americinn, to serve up to Schmitz Road. There is potential to expand the line up Halvorson Road.

A map was reviewed of the water line route. The route includes following the sewer easement to Olsonville, and then would be under the streets to help facilitate fire protection.

Project costs are estimated as follows: Highway 210 corridor, \$2.9 million; Olsonville and County Building, \$1.3 million; Schmitz Road Extension, \$2.1 million; Bid Alternative-Township Extension, \$1.2 million; other items of engineering, survey, geotech, and land, \$500,000. Total estimate is \$8 million.

Korby commended the communities for being unified to get good, clean, safe water to the area. Funding will continue to be worked on, with an emphasis on direct appropriation, but also still working with the PFA and RD. By combining those three sources, the project can be affordable.

The meeting was opened up for questions and comments, which were answered by the engineers and Joint Powers Board members:

QUESTION: How can the legislature justify not having clean water at the top of the list? It is best for everybody, especially our children. People count. Children count.

ANSWER: When infrastructure issues are discussed at the state level, the conversation is about roads, roads, roads, and bridges, not about sewer and water. This is the most worthy project Korby has ever been involved with.

COMMENT: I own land on Highway 210, and I hate to say it, but hiring a lobbyist is a good idea. They can talk to the key people and it will speed things up. It's too important not to partner with FDL.

QUESTION: I realize that there's things that need to be done, but there are people on fixed incomes, and the assessments alone will put us out of our home. I ran a day care for 21 years and had the water tested every year and never had issues. Where does the state come in to all of this?

ANSWER: We don't know what the assessment is going to be. Yes, there will be an assessment, monthly billing, and a WAC charge (water availability charge), we just don't know those amounts yet. As far as the transfer station, we are not really getting straight answers from the Minnesota Department of Health or the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The recommendation is for residents to call legislators and ask them for those answers. If the waterline goes past your house, you'll have to hook up. There may be grants available to help cover the cost of hooking up. Wolf mentioned there are also grants for well sealing.

QUESTION: Where are we at with the USDA?

ANSWER: This hearing is a part of their process. We don't have anything certain from RD, so appropriation has the highest likelihood of getting the project done. PFA and RD aren't going to do anything until the legislature comes through.

QUESTION: I live on Schmitz Road and my well is being monitored. When this line goes through, what happens to the well?

ANSWER: The assumption is that the well will be abandoned. If the state wants to continue monitoring the well, the cost would be up to them.

QUESTION: Is there any talk about running the sewer line to Schmitz Road?

ANSWER: No.

COMMENT: Thanks to everyone for their efforts.

COMMENT and QUESTION: Be transparent about WAC fees. The issue of annexation should be drafted into any agreement. Have you checked into federal funding and what the source of the arsenic is? The state says it is naturally occurring, so no one is going to take ownership, although the MPCA takes ownership with the in-home systems. The goal is to get the water line, which will help the City economically.

ANSWER: Once we know the grant amount, then we'll have a better idea of WAC fees and other charges. No one at the state level wants to take ownership of the arsenic issue. This project ranks 18 on the PPL list, and the city's project ranks number 12, which are both good rankings.

QUESTION: I'm a commercial property owner just down the road, and this is a good project. What about all of the vacant property along 210 – none of those people are here.

ANSWER: A meeting was held with FDL today, they are a huge property owner along the corridor. They are very interested in the water line.

QUESTION: What is the County's part?

ANSWER: They've committed to the project, and have indicated a financial commitment, but until we know the funding situation, no one else is willing to put anything in. We have talked to the County about potential water usage. The County development could be both residential and commercial, and water modeling was done to figure out various scenarios and plan the design accordingly. The goal is to keep costs down, but try to make the right decisions in planning for the long term so things won't have to be redone. The City is also planning their new water treatment plant for possible future expansion. So while we are planning for the future, we are being conservative in how much money to put into the project right now.

Willie thanked everyone for coming out, and for their good comments and questions. He again encouraged people to contact their legislators.

The meeting ended at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Chapin, Clerk

Diane Felde-Finke, Board Chair