

Look who's talking: Milwaukee and Waukesha

By [Don Behm](#) of the Journal Sentinel
April 20, 2012

Milwaukee and Waukesha officials are edging closer to starting negotiations over Waukesha's request to buy Lake Michigan water from Milwaukee.

On Friday, Waukesha Water Utility General Manager Dan Duchniak provided Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett with more details on where Waukesha could expand its water service area and the potential for development beyond its current boundaries in the next four decades.

A map and several reports summarizing population and other demographic information from Waukesha's municipal neighbors that might request water from that city in the future were prepared in the wake of an April 17 meeting between Duchniak and Patrick Curley, Barrett's chief of staff.

The map shows an enlarged Waukesha water supply area as recommended by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Here is a link to the map: <http://media.jsonline.com/documents/servicearea.pdf>.

Next week, Duchniak expects to meet with staff of the Milwaukee Water Works to exchange information on how to connect Waukesha to Milwaukee's water distribution system, he said in an email distributed Friday to Waukesha Water Commission members and Mayor Jeff Scrima.

The meetings are the start of a dialogue between Milwaukee and Waukesha and are not the beginning of negotiations over a water deal, Barrett spokeswoman Jodie Tabak said. Curley did not respond Friday to a request for an interview.

In Friday's correspondence with Barrett, Duchniak restates his viewpoint that a decision by Milwaukee to sell Lake Michigan water to Waukesha would not spur unbridled growth and give Waukesha a competitive advantage over Milwaukee in attracting new employers.

Only 15% of Waukesha's expanded water service area is available for new development, he says in the letter to Barrett. Here is a link to the

letter: <http://media.jsonline.com/documents/barrettletter.pdf>.

"For the most part, any new water service area beyond Waukesha's current service area will serve areas that are already developed, but are using private wells for water supply," he says.

Duchniak also repeated the assurance that any lakeshore community selling water to Waukesha would gain an economic advantage from the additional revenue at the same time that Waukesha's water rates are expected to more than double due to the costs of obtaining a new supply.

Any formal negotiations over a water deal must wait for the completion of three long-delayed reports requested by the Milwaukee Common Council in July 2011. Reports from the Milwaukee Water Works, Department of City Development and Legislative Reference Bureau are pending, city officials said Friday.

Waukesha is seeking the permission of Wisconsin and each of the other seven Great Lakes states to buy several million gallons a day of lake water so that it can abandon a ground water supply tainted with unsafe levels of radium.

Waukesha identifies Milwaukee, Oak Creek and Racine as three potential suppliers in a request for lake water under review by the state Department of Natural Resources. The DNR is drafting an environmental impact analysis of the proposal and will hold public hearings on its findings this spring or summer.

If Wisconsin approves the request, DNR officials said they will require Waukesha to have negotiated a purchase agreement with one of the three possible suppliers before the request is forwarded to the other Great Lakes states.

Waukesha has been negotiating with Oak Creek and Racine for several months.

Find this article at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/148344215.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.
