



Hannah Weikel/Freeman Staff

Residents attend a public open house about Waukesha's water plan at West High School on Tuesday evening.

Billing questions raised at water plan open house

Resident offers \$1,000 for official study showing current water source isn't sustainable

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WAUKESHA — About 50 Waukesha residents attended the first public open house since Milwaukee was tapped for future clean water supply, and came with a range of questions from technical to simple.

Ahead of the presentation, a bright yellow flyer was distributed by Waukesha resident Steve Edlund, who was offering \$1,000 to anyone who provides an official study substantiating that the city's current water source, through the deep aquifer, is not sustainable.

It goes on to say that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the United States Geological Survey have not endorsed Waukesha's studies on the deep aquifer.

Waukesha Water Utility General Manager Duchniak fielded several questions from Edlund and other attendees during his presentation, but at one point asked Edlund to save his questions for after the event.

Duchniak said Edlund's questions about the deep aquifer, from which Waukesha has been drawing water, were submitted to WDNR in the past and were reviewed by the parties that looked at Waukesha's application for Great Lakes water, "and they all sided with us." He said a memo was created in response to Edlund's inquiries that cost taxpayers several thousand dollars.

"It's not just us saying this, it's everyone who looked at it and reviewed it," Duchniak said of the studies done on the deep aquifer and Great Lakes water.

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“[Edlund] continues to make these comments, but he doesn’t want to look at what’s been done and what’s been reviewed and what all the experts are saying.”

Other residents at Tuesday’s open house were concerned about how, exactly, Milwaukee water would affect their water bills, which water officials announced will likely be sent out monthly instead of quarterly in the future.

Duchniak said the average family of four will pay about \$1,211 in 2017 with Milwaukee water and all households will be able to eliminate water softeners.

The open house was held at Waukesha West High School and was the first in a three-day series across all city public high schools. The sessions include a presentation by Duchniak, explaining the reason behind the city’s need for radium-free water and why the utility chose Milwaukee as the best option.

The next two meeting dates, locations and times are as follows:

■ Today: Waukesha South High School, Media Center; 401 E. Roberta Ave. from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with the presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

■ Thursday: Waukesha North High School, Media Center; 2222 Michigan Ave. from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with the presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.