

For immediate release

Friday, Feb. 19, 2010

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Waukesha to hold open house on water supply issues

Feb. 25 meeting to include presentations and public comment session

The Waukesha Water Utility will host an open house to provide information on water supply alternatives and a draft application for Great Lakes water on Thursday, Feb. 25 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The public meeting will also include a public comment period at 7 p.m.

The meeting comes four weeks after the water utility's release at a public meeting of a draft application for Lake Michigan water. The draft application includes a main document of approximately 80 pages, along with approximately 2,000 pages of appendices that provide further documentation and analysis of water supply options.

"We are once again reaching out to our taxpayers and ratepayers to solicit their input on this critical public health issue," said Waukesha Mayor Larry Nelson. "The meeting will allow citizens to ask in-depth questions and to get a deeper understanding of the issues, including the costs and feasibility of alternatives."

Waukesha Water Utility General Manager Dan Duchniak emphasized the need for a decision on a new water supply. "We have studied water supply alternatives for more than 25 years. It's time to take action to secure a long-term, healthy and sustainable water supply," he said. "Radium contamination is just one of the water quality problems we are facing."

The city is under a court order to reduce radium to federally-mandated levels by June of 2018. Under the most optimistic timetables for government approvals, design and construction, the city has only an 18-month buffer to accommodate potential delays. Fines for noncompliance are as high as \$10,000 per well per day.

"Over the years, all the alternatives – and all the combinations of alternatives – have been studied," Nelson said. "Two things have become clear. First, we cannot ensure public health and adequate water with our current water supply. Second, all the alternatives will require a significant public

investment. It is our duty as elected officials to find a solution that provides Waukesha with a water supply that is safe, and reliable for the long-term, and as cost-effective as possible.”

The open house will include displays and handouts at stations on several issues, including the need for a new water supply, water supply alternatives, costs, proposed methods of returning water to Lake Michigan after use and treatment, and requirements of the Great Lakes Compact. The format will allow attendees to interact one-on-one with the engineers and water experts who have been engaged in preparing the draft report.

The open house will be followed by a public comment session that will allow people to comment in person or to submit written comments on the draft application for Lake Michigan water. All comments received by the City during this public comment session will be submitted with Waukesha’s application to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to allow the comments to be used in their scoping process and compliance with the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act. . The public comments are an important part of the process because it is the public's opportunity to comment on issues to be addressed. The utility will continue to accept written comments on the draft application until March 26. Written comments can be sent to Lori Sweet, Waukesha Water Utility, 115 Delafield Street, Waukesha, WI 53188.

Waukesha is a leader in water conservation. It established a goal in 2006 of reducing per capita water use by 20% by 2020 and has reduced overall use by 11% in only three years. However, water conservation alone cannot solve its water supply problems.

Documents related to the draft application and water supply alternatives analysis are available to public on-line in the Future Water Supply section at www.ci.waukesha.wi.us. They are also available for review in hard copy at the Waukesha Water Utility, located at 115 Delafield Street, Waukesha, WI 53188.

The next opportunity for public input on this matter is tentatively scheduled before the Waukesha Common Council on March 8. The draft application will likely be before the Council again on April 8 before moving on to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for their review. Finally the matter will be presented to the governors of other Great Lakes states for their final approval.

The executive summary of the draft application for Lake Michigan water is attached.