

**CHANNAHON VILLAGE BOARD  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
PUBLIC INFORMATION FORUM  
JANUARY 13, 2022**

Village President Missey Moorman Schumacher called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call was taken with Trustees Greco, Host, McMillin, Perinar, Scaggs and Slocum present.

Also present were Village Administrator Thomas Durkin, Director of Community Development and Information Systems Mike Petrick, Finance Director Heather Wagonblott, Director of Public Works Ed Dolezal, Village Attorney David Silverman and Village Clerk Kristin Hall.

**VP Moorman Schumacher informed everyone present that this public information forum regarding an alternative water source for the Village of Channahon, is being recorded for posting on our Village website. She stated that the recording is intended to provide information for members of the public that could not be in attendance this evening. She also stated that it is important that the meeting be conducted smoothly and with a level of decorum, so that all interested parties are able to fully hear and understand, as best as possible, the information being presented. She further stated that as such, we ask the Board Members and staff to please utilize your microphones when speaking. She stated to the public, please wait until the question and answer portion of the agenda to provide comments or questions and use the podium and microphone, so that you will be able to be heard on the recording. She also stated do not speak over each other or interrupt others while they are speaking because we would like a clean recording to post on our website so that everyone who would like this information is able to receive it.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **Discussion – Alternative Water Supply**

#### **a. Presentation by Strand Associates, Inc.**

Chris Ulm, from Strand Associates, introduced himself to the public and gave a presentation on the current water supply source, why an alternative water source is necessary, the neighboring community investigations and studies, the details of the alternatives that the Village of Channahon investigated and the cost comparison feasibility analysis.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that she wanted to take a couple of minutes to address the aquifer going dry. She stated that unfortunately this is an issue that we have to deal with. Mr. Ulm has explained there is a difference between the shallow and deep water aquifers. As elected officials, we make decisions based on the information that is available, often times provided by trained and educated professionals, and that information is saying that even with City of Joliet coming off, the aquifer is not replenishing quickly enough to maintain the level that we need long-term. Our analyses shows that we will utilize almost to 2 - 7 million gallons per day, by ourselves, at build out. If other communities stay on the aquifer as well, there would be no way that the aquifer would be able to produce enough water for all of us. What it really comes down to for us, as an elected body, is we have a couple of options, both of which come with a price tag. Staying on the current water system also has a cost. That is not a free option. She stated that our

water bills go up to maintain a water system no matter what option we choose there is a price tag that goes along with that. As far as the Regional Water Commission is concerned, we have spent the last two years negotiating what that legislation and associated agreements would look like so whoever gets into that Regional Water Commission is fairly represented. She further stated this is not City of Joliet running the Regional Water Commission. The Commission was specifically set up so that whatever community involved, no matter the size, would have an equal vote. She stated that if we decided to stay on the shallow and deep wells, our residents on the east side of I-55 are currently served by the City of Joliet. She also stated that the water system over there would need improvements to continue to receive water through Joliet. The Illinois River option buys us less time than we may think it does. Even if we determine the aquifer could sustain us until 2050, a change to an alternative source is not just a turn of a valve. There are a number of improvements that go into that, so in 10-12 years we are still going to need to begin those improvements if we don't go with the Regional Water Commission. All of the modeling shows Illinois River water is a more expensive option. We would have to build our own water treatment plant and meet the ever-increasing regulations and requirements set by the EPA for water treatment, as well as hire staff to run the facility. She further stated that there comes a point in time, around 2050, that the cost breaks even and it is actually more expensive to pump and treat our own water from the Illinois River than if we choose to join the Regional Water Commission. We have an enormous amount of information and she doesn't want anyone to think this has been a quick study. We have been talking about this since 2019. We have a huge decision to make and our jobs as elected officials is to look at the available information that is presented to us by educated professionals through scientific methods and look at the big picture to find what is in the long-term best interest of this community. She hopes we are all here in 2050, but it's for our kids and our grandkids and we have to make sure they have sustainable, clean drinking water. This item has been to the Board on numerous occasions. This is a very big decision we have to make and the price tag is big no matter which way we decide to go. She also stated to the public that all the Village Board members live here too and any decision we make affects us that same way it affects everyone else. Mr. Ulm, our engineer, is also a resident and has a vested interest in this too. She stated that we wanted this information to be available to as many residents as possible and offer time for the public to ask questions and offer comments. She thanked everyone for coming tonight.

Mr. Ulm continued his presentation, going through the timeline for joining the Regional Water Commission and the cost comparison feasibility analysis. In 2020 dollars, the Capital Cost associated with connecting to the Regional Water Commission for Lake Michigan Water is \$75.6 million dollars. He stated that to build a water treatment plant and do all of the improvements for the Illinois River, the Capital Cost would be \$85.3 million dollars.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that the Regional Water Commission agreement is an opportunity to get into the Regional Water Commission and that opportunity will not be available to us in the future. The infrastructure will be sized to serve those who become members for a 2030 start date.

#### **b. Question and Answer Session**

Gene Breeheen, resident of Channahon, commented that the Illinois Water experts were wrong in 2016, and questioned if there is a possibility they are wrong again.

Mr. Ulm stated that in 2015 they were actually right. He stated that before that, even as early as the 1960's, they didn't have the capability to collect and analyze data as they do now. As those capabilities have become better, they have been able to be more accurate.

Mr. Breechen asked if all the surrounding villages on board.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that there are seven communities still at the table to become members this Regional Water Commission. She stated that we are one of them. She also stated that no one is making a formal decision until late January or February 2022. She further stated that all of them, except for us, have indicated that they are going with the Regional Water Commission. She stated that as Mr. Ulm had mentioned, we looked into the the Illinois River Water possibly partnering with our neighboring community, but all indications are that they are going with the Regional Water Commission. If we choose Illinois River Water we would be building that plant on our own.

Mr. Breechen asked what about homes that currently have a well, would the wells have to be condemned?

VP Moorman Schumacher stated no, they would remain on their private well.

Mr. Breechen asked is this going to be put on the ballot, as a referendum or is this something that the Board will vote on next month.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated it is a Board vote. This information will be put on our website for anyone who would like to refer back to it. There will also be a list of frequently asked questions. Questions that are asked here tonight will be included so members are the public who are not here will be able to know what questions were asked.

Trustee Slocum stated that we have a couple more meetings before the vote. He stated that if people couldn't come tonight, we have meetings they can come comment.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that we have a meeting on Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, which is our 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in January. She stated that we will have two meetings in February, on the first and third Mondays. All of the meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. here at the Village Hall.

Durkin stated that the preliminary agreement that was recently provided to the board will be on the agenda on Monday night. He stated that it will be fashioned in the form for approval but that will be the first time it is on the agenda for Board discussion.

John Sergeant, resident of Channahon, stated that this is a difficult decision. He stated when you are spending dollars 30-40 years in the future, a lot of us won't be living here and a lot of you won't be on the Board. He also stated that the same thing happened when we created Forest Preserve Districts and State Parks. A lot of those decisions were made and the people that made those decisions were never going to really see the true fruition. He further stated that this is one of those moments. He stated that this scenario has repeated itself in the northern suburbs, and it has slowly trickled down. He also stated that it doesn't take a genius to look at that and understand what happened in Naperville, when they created the DuPage Water Commission. He further stated that either way, we are going to be out of water in the future. He stated that PFAS

is the number one carcinogen in hollow organ cancers and also all the farm run-off as well, so that is a huge issue. He also stated that he encourages the Board and every village resident to support this. He further stated that he works for the City of Naperville and the average water bill is approximately \$160 for a family of four. He stated that he spends \$30 a month on softener salt, if you look at the cost 30 years from now it's pretty negligible, considering also appliance replacement.

Mr. Ulm stated that he forgot to mention, with Lake Michigan water, residents would be able to turn off your water softeners after a few months. He stated that he lived in Bolingbrook when they switched and he was happy to stop feeding the water softener. He also stated that your fixtures and appliances do better with Lake Michigan water than with groundwater.

Mr. Sergeant stated that he thinks our water is about 15 grains of hardness and Lake Michigan water is 8.8 grains of hardness. He stated that we usually soften our water to 5-7 grains when we do it so it's pretty close to what we soften our water to. He also questioned whether we would be maintaining our wells for as an emergency use system.

Mr. Ulm stated that the village would maintain their existing wells that they have in place for an extended emergency situation.

Mr. Sergeant asked if there would be a need to keep a water treatment plant up and running or would there be a cost savings with shutting that down.

Mr. Ulm stated that the treatment for radium would probably go away. He stated that there would need to be chlorination. He also stated that radium is a chronic contaminant, you have to drink a liter of water a day for seventy years to have a one in ten thousand chance of developing cancer from it. He further stated that IEPA will allow radium latent water to be distributed for 30 days. He stated that the plant will go away, but we will still need to disinfect.

Dolezal stated that to clarify, the village does not intend to continue building wells to meet its ultimate growth.

Mr. Ulm stated that Naperville, Schuamburg, Downers Grove all of those DuPage County communities all have wells that they run monthly. He stated that those are the wells that were there in 1988, and as those towns have continued to grow, they didn't continue to add wells. He also stated that the wells would provide emergency water usage with restrictions to reduce usage to the bare minimum needs.

Mr. Sergeant stated in 1988 when the decision was made to form the DuPage Water Commission, Aurora decided to back out and went with treating river water. He stated that it is his understanding now that Aurora now has to find an alternative water source because of low river restrictions with the Fox River.

Mr. Ulm stated that he doesn't know for sure. He stated that they use a combination of wells and Fox River water, as well as does Elgin. He also stated that he doesn't know if they are on the list of communities that need to find an alternate water source.

Mr. Sergeant stated that some residents have informed him that they are also looking for another source. He stated they said if they could go back to 1988 and redo it, they would.

Michael Litt, resident of Channahon, stated in some of the older neighborhoods we are on septic still, would we still remain on septic.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated yes, you would remain on septic.

Gary Barrows, resident of Channahon, asked if the Board consider higher rates for businesses that use more water.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated that we have a number of things to consider. She stated that once the decision is made, we can do what we want to do with our water once it gets to our point of delivery. She also stated that we have talked about different ways to ease the burden to the residents.

Dave Hartke, resident of Channahon, stated a concern of his is emerging contaminants, such as PFAS, there are only going to be more of those and they have become burdensome on municipalities with treatment systems. He stated that he thinks treating our own water is a high risk for the village to take on. He also stated that his opinion is the best option is to go with Lake Michigan water and to share the costs with other communities. He further stated that currently the PFAS regulations are so strict, he doesn't know how we would be able to meet them. He stated that on the east side, we currently have City of Joliet water so he believes we would already part of that.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated yes, residents east of I-55 are served by City of Joliet. She stated that unless we build something to pump water over from the west side to serve the east side residents, they are already served by the City of Joliet and would continue to be so Lake Michigan water is coming to you.

Trustee Scaggs stated that its not all the residents on the east side of I-55. He stated that some of the subdivisions are on wells.

Dolezal stated that they may choose, for financial reasons, just to connect to our current system. He stated that you would still be going through corrosion control and allocation costs. He also stated that it may be cheaper to just run a pipe from our existing system.

Dawn Cardona, soon-to-be resident of Channahon, stated that she is getting ready to close on a house in Town Center next week. She stated that she grew up in the City of Chicago. She also stated that she has been on the other side and she knows Chicago's water and it's very, very good water. She further stated that when she first moved out to Channahon, they had to really get used to the water, as far as the appliances and the hardness are concerned. She stated that when she heard about this, she was excited for Chicago water. She looks forward to receiving Chicago water.

Trustee Scaggs stated there isn't a question if the Lake Michigan water is good. He stated that when he was little, his grandparents would bring jugs of water home to Indiana. He also stated that it's not an issue if the water is good or bad, it's great water. It's just a matter of \$75 million.

VP Moorman Schumacher stated this is not a decision that anyone is taking lightly.

Trustee Scaggs stated that we as a Board have been talking about this for months but there are so many moving parts to this and we are still learning.

VP Moorman Schumacher reminded everyone these meetings will be on our website, if anyone would like to refer back to it. She stated that this was a lot of information, so if you have questions, please email them and we will be happy to answer them. She also stated that your questions will be included in the frequently asked questions portion on our website.

Durkin stated that the information will be on our website and asked people to give us a little bit of time to get everything together. He stated that the information should be out there early next week.

Mr. Breechen asked when this goes through, when do we start incurring the cost on our bill and when does the water start coming in.

Mr. Ulm stated that January 1, 2030 is when the City of Chicago expects payment and that is when residents will receive Lake Michigan water.

Finance Director Wagonblott stated if the Board decides to join the Regional Water Commission, we would at that point, be taking a closer look on the cost versus the revenues. She stated that you would most likely see a nominal increase soon, sometime in 2022. She also stated that we will do everything we can to make is a minimal impact to the residents, as possible.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Slocum made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Seconded by Trustee Greco.

**VERBAL ROLL CALL: ALL AYES**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Submitted by  
Kristin Hall  
Village Clerk**

