

Carlton/Twin Lakes Regional Water District Legislative Meeting

PREPARED BY: Tim Korby – 612-655-9878 (tkorby@donohue-associates.com)
MEETING PLACE: Carlton County Transportation Building
MEETING DATE: Monday October 26, 2015
MEETING TIME: 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
ATTENDANCE

Senator Tony Lourey	Representative Mike Sundin	Commissioner Marv Bodie
Mayor Kitty Bureau	Derek Wolf, Carlton PUC	LeAnn Theresen, Carlton
Ken Witte, Twin Lakes	Diane Felde-Finke, Twin Lakes	Randy Willie, Twin Lakes
Mike Tardy, County Engineer	John Vernon, Twin Lakes	Connie Christenson, Co. EDA

- 1. Introductions** - Thirteen people were in attendance representing the City of Carlton and Twin Lakes Township Joint Waters Board, Carlton County, and our legislative representatives.
- 2. Project Background** - A brief summary of the background, history, needs and opportunities of the proposed project. The group has been working at getting a regional water system to serve the District since 1993. Work already completed by the group members includes:
 - a. Twin Lakes Township completing preliminary planning documents and construction drawings for part of the project, and
 - b. The City of Carlton expanding their water tower size to handle both the City and regional water district.
 - c. The City and Township combined have spent over \$550,000 on this project thus far.
- 3. Project needs** – A very serious and immediate need for the proposed regional water system project includes:
 - a. The local water supply has serious contaminants in the aquifer, including high levels of arsenic
 - b. Some local residents have been mandated to use bottled water, which is being paid for by the State
 - c. The water supply (quantity) is extremely low to a point where one building alone has had to drill 7 wells to supply their building with water, and yet still is not enough available water to adequately run their operations
 - d. Severely harming the local economy – the lack of water is not allowing for current business to expand, and perspective businesses are shying away from this area due to the lack of a safe and reliable water supply
- 4. Project costs** – The current project is estimated at \$10 million, which includes the water distribution system to serve the regional water district, WTP upgrades and a new well.
- 5. Financial need** – Grants from the State are needed to help fund most of this project. The last estimate was that each homeowner would be assessed \$54,500 which is unrealistic. One main reason for this high cost is Townships tend to have a lower density of buildings, hence the higher cost due to lower number of users.

6. Legislative Bill/Special Appropriation

- a. Funding Request Sheet – a funding request sheet was reviewed with each item analyzed for appropriateness
- b. Sample Bill – a sample bill from another City for a similar project was provided for discussion
- c. State Special funding list – Discussion on the State’s current funding list whereupon the legislators discussed the potential for funding based on our not meeting the prescribed capital bond application process. However, if we are not able to get funding this year, we can try again next session.

7. **Open Discussion** – The Senator and Representative both stated they are willing to assist the District with writing a Bill for the project and doing their best to get this project funded. They recommended working with the Public Facility Authority to also go through the normal PFA funding process simultaneously. They would work with Tim and Connie to get the Bill written. They also suggested that a group of 3-4 persons familiar with this project help testify at the Capital during the Legislative Session once the Bill is submitted. This could include a business owner, the Economic Development Authority and 1-2 persons from the Regional Water Board.

The negative economic impact has been occurring including the fact that MnDOT, Carlton County and existing/new business owners are not able to build new buildings or expand existing buildings due to the lack of good safe and reliable water.

8. **Next steps/meetings** - The next steps and tasks that need to be completed include –
 - a. Answer the question – how long has the State been paying for bottled water?
 - b. Answer the question – What is the level of arsenic in the local water supply, and what is the MDH’s current acceptable level of arsenic in a municipal water supply?
 - c. The legislators, Tim and the group will work on writing a Bill to help fund this project, with the starting ask of \$10 million.
 - d. Tim and the group will submit grant applications to the PFA.
 - e. We will determine a group that will assist the Legislators with testifying on behalf of the Bill during the upcoming Legislative Session; most likely to include a business owner, economic development representative and 1-2 from the Water Board.
 - f. Will verify that MnDOT did not expand their local facility to the size they preferred due to the lack of water. They might complete an additional expansion concurrent to the regional water system being installed.
 - g. Talk to the Fond du lac Reservation Council about assisting with funding of the regional water project since they own property adjacent to the proposed water system.
 - h. Hold a public hearing/forum to keep the local residents and businesses up to date regarding the status of the project. These residents/business owners can also assist with lobbying by making phone call/emails in support of this project.

9. Adjourn