Public Information Session Notes

Proposed Central Water System – Village of Chester
Tuesday, December 11, 2018 – Chester Area Middle School

The following are questions posed by residents who attended the Public Information Session on December 11, 2018. From as early as 5:10pm to approximately 6:50 pm, residents spoke to Municipal Staff and some of the Councillors present about the central water system proposed for the Village of Chester. Following the informal session, residents were seated and invited to ask questions or make statements. The following is that feedback:

Q: What are the (approximate) ratios of the costs for water supply and distribution?
A: That can be found in Table 6.2 of the CBCL report.

Q: Have options for pro-rating been considered, since it is likely to cost less per property to distribute among smaller-sized lots (closer together = shorter runs)?
A: Not at this point – it is a fixed amount per property. The same cost per property is proposed, no matter the size.

Q: What if the $2,564 is not paid by who can't afford to pay, plus annual fee, plus taxes, plus $1,609 financing?
A: This will be included in regulations: payment arrangements or disconnection.

Q: Is it the business district asking for this? The "T"?
A: A lot of the business district has water problems, but so do homes in the Village core and boundary.

Q: 1990 – H2O has iron and manganese
2009 – H2O in Spectacle Lake does also.
A: The CBCL report indicates that this has been common since 1967 and felt that Spectacle Lake was a typical water source. More testing will be completed on

quality prior to design, which would have to meet Canadian Drinking water regulations.

Q: 1993 – 59% of residents said NO – Council continued to buy land – WHY?
A: This issue was still being discussed in 1997, and beyond. Council was preparing for the future, if water was needed.

Q: Christie Chaplin Saunders - has land acquisition on Spectacle Lake been factored as an asset towards the system?
A: It is not factored in price of land so far. With regards to the future, there has been no discussion. Properties bought and paid for are through the general tax rate, and not toward the cost of the utility. If we do not proceed, the properties will be discussed.

Q: Darrell Tingley – The mailout received by residents refers to $48 Million. He believes that number is bogus. It will be shared among property owners; none of the municipal, provincial, federal properties are factored in. Will the amount of money be shared with all? It could be a significant decrease in overall cost.
A: Matt Davidson referred to the list of municipal properties posted on Voices and Choices in an earlier response to this question/statement. There has been no discussion of exempting government, and they have been factored in the costs. It was felt that levels of government should not to be included in poll.

Q: Carol Nauss – Concerning apartments, will it cost $2,500 to connect one building? What about apartments with many hookups?
A: Currently they are being treated as one connection – one line from road to building. The building owner would be billed. Matt looks at cost three ways: main, connection, and usage. Larger users could have different type/size meter.

Q: Annette Collicutt – For those who hook up and have wells, what happens to wells on those properties? Is there a cost of filling in the wells once central water is hooked up?
A: Matthew Davidson – Yes, if abandoned, the owner has to follow regulations and fill the well. The cost for doing that is not factored in the costs presented as that is the landowner's responsibility.

Q: Gary Collicutt – The Village does need a water supply, but can we all afford it? He didn't realize there were so many PID numbers in the Village. Are they big enough to build a home on? A lot of votes – a lot of tax? If homes are built on the properties, what about the extra load on the sewer system? If it is going to bankrupt some and chase out older residents, do we need to do that?
A: Matthew Davidson discussed the difference between PIDs and Assessment Account Numbers. There are 1100 taxable accounts. *Mr. Collicutt – properties not developable should not get a vote.* A: Once a water system is installed, regulations around lot size could change. As far as sewer, the entire proposed area is not serviced with sewer, only various areas. That being said, we are looking at Wastewater Treatment Plant design and possible expansion. Regardless of water, there is always the demand for wastewater.

Q: Dennis Connolly - Has the calculation for a lump sum payment of capital charges been made?
A: Malcolm Pitman – This hasn't been discussed, but it could be a possibility.

Q: Have sites be identified for the plant for Spectacle Lake / Middle River?
Matthew Davidson - Sites have been selected over time. The current design (preliminary) identifies lots near the lake to be used. Middle River sites are not defined as the hydrogeological assessment did not point out a specific property. The Municipality has land in that area, and we would use what we have.

Q: Which properties are not eligible?
A: Water lots without a structure, and properties owned by the Municipality, Village Commission, and Province.

Q: If they are going to get water why aren't they paying the capital charges?
A: Matthew Davidson – When the cost estimate was done, the expectation was that anyone who can connect will pay. Government agencies will not vote, but they will pay.

Q: Bob St Laurent – Being aware of our demographics, affordable housing is important, and rent is charged according to income. How will a central water system affect future affordable housing that we need in our community? If rent increases, it may be a negative for those seeking affordable housing.

A: Matthew Davidson – We don't know right now. If don't have answers, we will find them.

Q: What percentage of votes are required to make this happen?
A: Malcolm Pitman – Council will use the information from the poll to guide their decision. They want to be clear that the Village does/does not want water.

Q: The price of infrastructure projects is never on budget. Has there been any consideration of the escalating costs for this project and how will it be mitigated?
A: Malcolm Pitman – The estimates used in the calculations have factored in inflation. Contingencies are also included, which would help mitigate the unknowns. The estimates are also Class D, which could be 30% higher or 20% less. If the design work proceeds, it will provide a more accurate estimate.

Q: Bill Anthony – Is 75% government funding 100% guaranteed?
A: Matthew Davidson – The percentage funded is locked in for an ICIP application, but may not be 75% - it is 73% if we are successful. If we can't get the funding, we will be responsible for the balance.

Q: Darcy Houghton – Is the Municipal Government included in the 75% of government funding?
A: No, that is provincial and federal.

Q: Could the Municipality contribute the remaining?
A: Malcolm Pitman – Under the Municipal Government Act, municipalities have the power to spend money for a water supply. It would be council's decision.

Q: Can money from reserves be used?
A: It is possible, but it was not factored in the numbers handed out. That would be determined by Council.

Q: Joanne Grant – In 2011, Spectacle Lake was considered as a water source, and the estimate was $13 Million. She is in favour of a water system. How can the cost have increased so much since 2011?
A: Matthew Davidson – That amount was from a KVM report estimate. The reasons for the difference is 1) that the scope of work is not the same as it only included areas serviced by sewer; and 2) the figure used did not include HST. In

2016, the previous Councillor asked for an estimate on a water system, and staff took that number and escalated it to represent current pricing.

Q: Vote on January 26 – at this point, you don't know the percentage of the vote required to make the water utility a go. What about after vote?
A: If results indicate no, nothing happens. The project does not proceed. If results indicate yes, a pre-design is required. More information will be available. Grants from other levels of government will be available later.

Q: New resident – Experience with government projects is that the estimates are over. The Class D estimate is very broad. Who is on the hook for the addition costs? If the government will fund 75%, as a resident, we are doubling our cost for the project.
A: Matthew Davison – We have only been provided a Class D. If it is decided to proceed, more design has to happen. The A estimate is a tender estimate plus/minus 10%. That would be used in the funding application.

Q: Should the vote be to go with a Class A estimate? In favour or not to proceed with design? We need a better idea of cost, but at what cost?
A: Matthew Davidson, if Council wishes to proceed, $1.7 Million is required for the design.

Q: Frank Metzgher – It makes sense that if a big trench is dug for a water system, can we look at putting sewer in at the same time? Is a poll as to whether we want to proceed? If Council is going to ignore it, why not pay for it?
A: Matthew Davidson – The Municipality is looking at expansion of the Chester Wastewater Treatment Plant. If there is the ability to expand, then Council can direct staff to determine where the capacity can go.

Q: Susan Dennis – Under NS Law, it is the Municipality who is responsible for safe drinking water systems within its jurisdiction. She agreed with the comment on affordable housing. The issue is housing without drinking water is not affordable. The responsibility of the Municipality to determine how much money they are willing to put into a water system.
A: Malcolm Pitman – Municipalities have the power to put money into a water

system, but there is no direction to do so at this time. We have power, but we are not mandated [directed to by law].

Q: Christie Chaplin Saunders – The interest is a substantial of portion to be paid; how secure is the interest rate for the term of the debt?
A: Malcolm Pitman: We used calculations from CBCL, but we believe that the interest rate when it comes time to borrow may be less than the CBCL report. They may have estimated higher.

Q: Kerry Keddy (on behalf of VOCTADA) – Has Council considered health concerns? A sewer break shut down a large area in Chester. Are they factoring in the other issues, such as minerals and other contamination?
A: Danielle Barkhouse – Council is taking their time and considering all aspects. Malcolm Pitman – The driving force of this project is the reliable source of clean drinking water.

Q: Bill Dire – Do we know before we vote that there will be Provincial and Federal funding?
A: Matthew Davidson – No. The application for funding will only happen after a detailed design can be provided. There is no guarantee that the application will be successful. It hasn't been determined what will be a successful poll (ie percentage of vote).

Q: Don MacEwan – We are voting on whether to construct. The vote will depend on what people expect they will have to pay. At this time there is not sufficient information on what the costs will be. Someone may vote no because they are unsure of what it will be for them. Indicate in the question that there will be a second poll. May get "no" because people don't know what they are voting for.
A: Danielle Barkhouse - She has seen it as a vote to proceed for a predesign for a solid Class A estimate so people know what they are getting into.

Q: Gail Fraser – She encouraged by Danielle's last remarks. The question of the survey needs to be other than what proposed. Another poll/question.

Q: Mike Mulrooney – Doesn't know why the are talking about $45/$48 – there are no grants available for that kind of money. Needs to scale back to 10-12

million – in core of the village. Do what we can do for that amount. Could add on to the system later. $48 Million is out of the question.

Q: Darcy Houghton – How are we reaching those who don't live here year round?
A: Pam Myra – Contact Pam to get information on how to vote/get their letter.

Q: Wilf Burke – We have a water system at Chandlers Cove. Are we expected to contribute to capital costs for a water system that we have already incurred capital costs to do?
A: Malcolm Pitman – Yes, Chandlers Cove is in the service area.

Q: Darrell Tingley – There are two schools in the Village. Only 7% come from within the service area. That means 93% are outside of the Village who go to schools. Considering that, are those people in the outside districts being charged a water fee or tax of an amount annually to pay for the children who will use the water at school?
A: Malcolm Pitman – Indirectly, we would charge the Centre for Education. The Province and municipalities currently fund centres for education.

Q: Whoever uses water should pay for it. Resident has her own well, doesn't want the water, and doesn't want to pay for anyone else's.