

GLENCOE NEWS

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Glencoe water plant plans proceed at a slow drip



Tom Weathers, superintendent of the Glencoe Water Plant, checks on the sodium hydroxide machine at the water plant . | File

BY DANIEL I. Dorfman For Sun-Times Media | @dandorfman

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The future of Glencoe's water supply remains unclear, yet some type of collaboration with an obscure government agency may be emerging as the most cost effective option.

At the Jan. 16 Village Board meeting, President Larry Levin noted multiple possibilities remain in play regarding the village's aging lakefront water plant.

"We are still investigating locations and water treatment methodologies and our options before us," Levin said. "It is a big process, and we are just trying to do our due diligence as thoughtfully as possible."

Yet with a nod toward the possible millions of dollars required for construction of a new plant and or renovation of the existing facility, some type of village alliance with the Northwest Water Commission is being openly discussed more and more.

The NWC supplies water to Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Palatine and Wheeling.

“In short, a partnership could reduce a resident’s tax burden,” he said. “It may provide an ongoing revenue stream, reducing the necessary costs of renovation and replacement and/or help improve the beach for our residents.”

How the relationship would specifically evolve is up in the air, but one proposal deemed unfeasible last year by Glencoe and the NWC was the construction of a 100-million gallon-per-day plant on the existing location. Both sides considered that too big for the location; the village typically goes through 1.8 million gallons daily and occasionally reaches as much as 5 million gallons. Therefore, a 100 million gallon a day plant would not be necessary.

What has not been ruled out is the construction of a pumping station on the location, according to Glencoe Public Works Director David Mau. He said a pumping station requires a much smaller footprint, and the NWC could take in water from the village’s pumping station and channel it to its facilities with the village receiving some type of benefit.

The NWC now purchases water from the City of Evanston, and they own a 60-inch pipeline that runs from Evanston to NWC facilities in Des Plaines. From there, the water is moved to the four member communities.

The NWC is interested in Glencoe because it is seeking an additional emergency supply of water.

“The commission is looking for a redundant supply of Lake Michigan water, and so there are communities along the lakeshore we are investigating,” said John DuRocher, NWC executive director.

As Glencoe is assessing its situation, the NWC is investigating whether there are other communities interested in an alliance. DuRocher would not comment on whether negotiations are taking place with other municipalities.

The status of the talks appear to be moving along slowly. DuRocher discussed options with former Village Manager Paul Harlow, but has yet to speak with Phil Kiraly, who became village manager in December.

In the meantime, the village continues to work with Chicago-based engineering firm Strand & Associates to review plans and proposals. They were retained on a \$50,000 contract last May.

Among Strand’s tasks are performing a computer modeling system to determine the feasibility and costs of water system distribution, if the plant were to be moved to a location away from the lakefront.

If an arrangement with the NWC can not be made, other options for the future of the water supply include renovating the existing plant or a land swap with the Glencoe Park District to construct a new plant close to the existing location.

Levin said he expected some type of feedback from the staff by late March or early April.

When asked by trustee Barbara Miller whether he expected a formal report at that time, Levin said it may not be in that form, but he expected some type of update at that point.