

# Glencoe considers partnership to cut cost of new water plant

**BY BRIAN L. COX**  
Special to the Tribune

Faced with a staggering \$40 million price tag on replacing its aging lakefront water-treatment plant, Glencoe is considering partnering with the Northwest Water Commission to dramatically reduce the cost, officials said.

"They have been looking for a second source of water," Village Manager Philip Kiraly said of the commission. "They currently are buying water from Evanston. From a redundancy perspective, they are interested in a second source of water but also from a

growth opportunity perspective.

"They're looking at this as sort of an opportunity and frankly when we look at it, it certainly is an opportunity as well to reduce the expected cost of the replacement of the water-treatment plant," he said.

The plant is 90 years old, although the typical life span for such facilities is 60 to 70 years, Kiraly said. In 2012, Glencoe issued a request for proposals to engineering firms for a water system master plan but Kiraly said the village did not award a contract because of the potential partnership with the commission.

The Northwest Water Commission was formed in 1957 to provide its member municipalities — Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Palatine and Wheeling — with potable water.

"Certainly we knew that within several years the village would have to do something and it would be a large expenditure," Kiraly said.

"We haven't really even gotten to the point where we're negotiating with the Northwest Water Commission," he said. "There's a due diligence phase that they are in the midst of."

Village engineers are studying the plant to try to

determine how much longer it can function, with a report expected late this year or early next year.

"The Northwest Water Commission is also doing a needs assessment and I think their time line is about the same as ours," Kiraly said. "Once those two due diligence pieces are done, that is when we will be bringing something back to the Village Board for further discussion."

Chicago's recent decision to increase its water rates is expected to have an impact on how Glencoe and the Northwest Water Commission move forward on their plans, he said.

"As Chicago continues to increase their rates, that may open up opportunities for some communities that are served by Chicago to work with the Northwest Water Commission versus buying from Chicago," he said.

Kiraly also said Glencoe is aware of some residents' concerns regarding the cost and possible relocation of the water treatment plant.

"We're actually in the process of constructing a dedicated web page on our website that will be focused solely on the water plan process and project," he said. "We want to make sure we're as clean and upfront

as we can be.

"Part of the study looks at possible locations for the plant," he said.

"We are taking into account some of the concerns that are out there. There are definitely people in the community that would like to see the beach become all beach and no water plant at all," he said. "That may or may not be feasible, depending on what costs look like to replace the plant."

Once a final decision is made on whether to replace the plant, a bond issue to pay for it would be put to referendum, Kiraly said.

[triblocaltips@tribune.com](mailto:triblocaltips@tribune.com)