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# Oswego won't rush decision on water treatment plant



Oswego Village Administrator Dan Di Santo (Courtesy of Village of Oswego)

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**O**swego is going to take its time before making a final decision on a possible new water treatment plant which may be built with Yorkville and Montgomery.

Oswego trustees this week were presented with the findings of a feasibility study that considers the potential for the village to partner with the two towns in the construction of the facility.

"This is the first of many conversations on this," Oswego Village President Gail Johnson said. "This is not a decision we will be making this year."

The three communities commissioned Engineering Enterprises of Sugar Grove to do an analysis of options concerning a joint water treatment plant. The study was prompted by concerns about the aquifers that supply water in the area, which are projected to be depleted in the coming years because of overuse. Part of the plan may be to use the Fox River as a water source for the towns.

Johnson said the village will be stressing the importance of water conservation as well.

"Part of the concern is no matter what we do water conservation needs to be done as a region," she said.

Johnson said the village will not rush into a decision on the proposed new facility.

"The worst we can do is invest in something now that might be antiquated technology in 10 years. We are not going to rush into this - the dollars for this is mind-boggling," Johnson said after the presentation.

The report evaluated the use of the Fox River as a water supply source for a planning period going out to 2050. Jeffrey Freeman, of Enterprises Engineering, said integrating a higher level of water conservation efforts across the community would reduce the projected cost of the plant.

The capital cost to build a joint water treatment plant varies for each respective community. The engineers developed 2016 estimates for each municipality based on "current trends" and "less resource intensive" water usage.

Oswego's share for a joint Fox River water treatment facility is an estimated \$56.7 million to \$61.2 million, depending on water conservation levels, according to the report. The estimates are based on Oswego residents as a whole using between 11.9 million gallons and 15.6 million gallons of water.

The capital investment for the shared plant for Yorkville is estimated at around \$48 million and Montgomery is at a projected \$30 million since those communities would use less of the water.

Oswego has eight deep sandstone wells that supply water to the community. Freeman said Elgin began drawing water from the Fox River in 1985. By 1995, Aurora began using the Fox River as a source of water.

The study estimates Oswego's future population at around 91,000 in 2050, based on an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent based on projections of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The current population for all three communities – Oswego, Yorkville and Montgomery - is around 93,000 now, and that is projected to grow to 193,000 over the next three decades.

Freeman said it could take 10 years to build a joint water treatment plant.

Oswego Trustee Joe West inquired about the viability of Oswego getting its water from the city of Aurora. The engineers said they did look into that for Montgomery and determined it was not a viable option.

"We did meet with Aurora and determined it wasn't feasible because they have their own capacity limitations," engineer Peter Wallers said. "Having other communities (establish) rates for you often times is not a desirable place to be in. Communities generally want control over their own destiny."

Dan Di Santo, Oswego village administrator, said Oswego would automatically see a water rate increase even without Aurora making necessary infrastructure improvements to expand capacity.

"I don't want to say the door is totally closed but there are some definite roadblocks," Di Santo said.

*Linda Girardi is a freelance reporter for The Beacon-News*

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