

Town Board Seeks Property Owners' Opinions on Municipal Water Options, July 26, 2023

The Queensbury Town Board is seeking the opinions and guidance of property owners in eastern Queensbury about a possible expansion of municipal water service.

The Town Board has been exploring two potential routes for expanded municipal water service:

- One route could bring service to Ridge Road, Stonehurst Drive, Sunnyside Road East, Jenkinsville Road, Old Cronin Road, Mud Pond Road, Azure Drive and Rainbow Trail, at a cost of \$5,935,290.
- Another potential route could bring municipal water to Ridge Road, Jenkinsville Road, Old Cronin Road, Mud Pond Road, Azure Drive and Rainbow Trail, at a cost of \$6,480,000.

The Town Board has not decided whether to expand municipal water service nor has it chosen an option. It has been soliciting input from the community as it seeks to find an approach that is affordable, attractive to property owners, and responsive to the community's needs. To assess community interest in municipal water service, the Town Board will send a survey to individuals who own property on the two routes. The results of the survey will be tabulated and shared with the community. The results will be considered by members of the Town Board, along with technical and financial information generated by the town's engineering firm and other factors, as they weigh whether to expand municipal water service and where to do so.

"We want to know what property owners think about the benefits and costs of municipal water service," said Supervisor John Strough. "This is not a referendum. It's simply a survey. We are asking for the community's guidance and hope all of the potentially affected property owners will participate. We are seeking to make a decision that serves the interests of the greatest number of property owners."

If municipal water service is expanded in eastern Queensbury, property owners would not be forced to accept it. Those who do accept the service would pay an estimated \$400 to \$575 per year, based on the assessed value of their homes and average residential water usage. For example, a home assessed at \$300,000 whose occupants use 80,000 gallons of water a year would pay an estimated \$400 a year. Homes that are assessed at higher values or whose occupants consume greater volumes of water would pay up to an estimated \$575 a year. If created, the expanded water district would become part of the existing Queensbury Water District. Property owners who opt not to connect to the municipal water service would pay an estimated \$145 to \$320 per year, based on assessed values.

Whether they choose to connect to municipal water or not, all property owners in the areas served by municipal water would have the benefit of additional fire protection through the installation of hydrants. Those property owners who opted not to connect to municipal water service immediately would also have the benefit of being able to hook up in the future if they or future owners wished to do so.

While the Town does not plan to force property owners to accept municipal water if they do not want it, owners of properties where well water is at risk of contamination will be strongly encouraged to use municipal water, if provided.

In 2021, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) expressed concern about potential contamination of drinking water wells near the town landfill and other landfills in the Jenkinville area. DEC's focus is on emerging contaminants polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 1,4-Dioxane. DEC and the Department of Health sampled drinking water wells in the area of the landfills and found no PFAS that exceeded state drinking water standards at that time. In some wells, 1,4-Dioxane was detected but at levels that the state said did not pose a significant health risk. DEC has said it is continuing to study the area.

The Town Board resolved to work with state agencies and Jenkinville residents to address environmental conditions in the area and engaged C.T. Male to explore options for municipal water service.

Recognizing that the cost of accepting municipal water may be a concern for some property owners, the Town Board has begun seeking ways to defray the financial impact. The Board is actively seeking federal and state funds for this project. If received, they would reduce the costs for property owners outlined above. The Town Board also is exploring ways, including the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds, to help property owners pay for connecting their homes to the municipal water for a limited time, if the service is provided.

The community survey will be sent to property owners' homes the week of July 24, 2023. If you live along the roads that might be served by municipal water and do not receive the survey, please call the office of Town Supervisor Strough at (518) 761-8229, or email him at gbysupervisor@queensbury.net

A self-addressed, stamped envelope will be included in each survey packet. Property owners are asked to return the completed surveys to the Town as soon as possible.