



Submitted by Pam Lottinville April 22, 2022

## St Anne Water Project

Since I was elected as the Village President 13 years ago, the biggest obstacle facing our town was how to update, modernize and improve our water system. Our water system has water mains approximately 100 years old. Added to this, how to reduce the iron (rust) in our water system. During these years Aqua Illinois Water, has approached the Village twice about possible purchasing our system. The major reason we have turned down these offers is that our water rates would increase significantly, and we would have no control on the water rates going forward. This was simply unacceptable. Our rates would surely be 2 or 3 times what they are today. Therefore, we have started to explore how we could undertake this project on our own and maintain the low water rates that we all enjoy. Over the last couple of years of planning, we have finally agreed to a 3-phase plan to drastically improve and modernize our water system. This plan consists of 3 phases. The phases are as follows;

Phase 1 – Replacing the water mains along Guertin Street and Route 1. Guertin street will run from the Pump House east to the railroad tracks. These new pipes will, for the most part, go in along the parking area on the south side of Guertin Street. The Route 1 pipe will run on the west side of Route 1 from Guertin Street to Ambrose Ave. or just past the Bowling Alley. All the home owners and business along these routes will have new hook ups to the new main. This phase of the project has gone out for bid and is scheduled to start constructing this September.

Phase 2 – The main part of this phase in the installation of an Iron (Rust) Filtration System. While Iron is a natural occurring mineral in water, we need to be able to filter it out as much as we can so we don't have "rusty" water. This project will include enlarging our Pump House on the SW side of town. We plan on going to bid on this project in the next 6 months.

Phase 3 – Replacing the Water Main down Station Street from Route 1, going east to just past the FS Grain Bins. The other street will be Chicago Ave from Station Street south to Sheffield Ave. Again, all these businesses and home owners will have new water hookups to the new water mains. This Phase 3 should go to bid in 12 months or so.

The total cost of this Water Project will be between \$5-6 million dollars. The funding for this project is being done through EPA Loans. The beauty of these loans is that we can qualify for up to \$400,000 in principle forgiveness for each phase and the interest rates is only 1% over a 30-year payback period. Therefore, spreading out our payments over the 30 years in order to minimize our payments. We secured our first loan a couple months ago, and we did receive the \$400,000 principal forgiveness. We will be applying for Phase 2 funding later this year and we plan to apply for Phase 3 funding in 2023. In order to make these loan payments, we have slowly started to raise our water rates by \$5.00 a year. In 5-years' time we will have generated enough income to make the payments for our new Water Mains and Iron Filtration System. While at the same time we will have kept our water system in house and most importantly kept our water rate significantly lower than the sounding area. While the next 2 or 3 years will have some issues with construction, the long-term advantages will be worth the short-term inconveniences. I am very proud our Board of Trustees for working with me to make this long overdue plan become a reality.

***Written by: President David O'Connell***

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