

Aqua Illinois Advisory Council

Wednesday, April 17, 2024
7:00 PM

Attendees:

1. David Carter, Aqua Illinois
2. Michelle Buffenbarger, Aqua Illinois
3. Alan Stark, Aqua Illinois
4. Areca Van Mill, Aqua Illinois
5. Andrew Price, Aqua Illinois
6. Paul Zucker, Advisory Council Member
7. Michael Talbett, Advisory Council Member
8. John Malcolm, Advisory Council Member
9. Appaji Valavala, Advisory Council Member
10. Nancy Gold, Advisory Council Member
11. Paul Pike, Advisory Council Member

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- David Carter: Introduced himself, Aqua leadership, including new Communications staffer, Areca Van Mill. Advisory Council members (ACM) introduced themselves.

Overall Recap & Progress Report

Aqua App Customer Portal

- David Carter: Shared updates on ePortal, including ability to access account information and ePortal tools, like the Disruption Map, via mobile or web.
 - ACM explained that ePortal app has a bug that doesn't allow for use of specific characters that password creators typically use, which may cause frustration to new users.
 - David Carter replied that it will be looked into.
 - ACM requested demonstration videos for ePortal and Disruption Map
 - Michelle Buffenbarger says training videos were available for staff and that Aqua will see if those are available to share with customers
 - Andrew Price explained that field staff are trained to use Disruption Map tool in real-time to track disruptions more effectively

Aqua Illinois Operations & Communications Progress Update

- David Carter shared updates to a pilot program for new system monitoring methods; tabletop exercises conducted in March, recreating the July '23 outage; a well refurbishment led to increased water capacity; preliminary findings of the second soil sampling around the main break suggests corrosivity; and informed ACM that David presented at the Hawthorne Woods Village Board meeting to provide similar updates shared at advisory council meetings
 - Michelle Buffenbarger provided updates on system monitoring additions, including successful detection of leak that has since been repaired

- David Carter confirmed that the Aquarius system monitoring pilot program will run through Summer '24, after which decision on further implementation will be decided
- David Carter and Michelle Buffenbarger provided update on additional SCADA monitoring rollout, which has already begun with a kick-off meeting
- David Carter provided update on refurbishments done to Well #1 in which section of pump pipe was replaced, increasing its capacity by over 100,000 gallons a day
- David Carter provided update on preliminary soil sampling results, finding corrosion at sections of pipe that is already near it's end-of-life and thus will be removed/replaced, with additional details to come once soil analysis is completed
 - Additional testing will be done in other parts of Hawthorn Woods to ensure sampling results elsewhere
 - Full implementation of sampling results will likely be fully incorporated in 2025
 - ACM asked what an anticipated timeline of repair is should corroded pipe fail
 - David Carter explained that valves were added to enable speedy shut-off and bypass of that section of pipe, which should only cause limited disruption and clarified that the specific corroding pipe is located in an area in which is it redundant, allowing for minimal disruption during repairs
- David Carter provided update from Village Board meeting and that previous AC meeting was discussed along with an introduction to the ePortal and Disruption Map

Water Treatment Plant Project Plan

- David Carter reiterated no major changes to the schedule with service still on track for November 2024 and shared current plant renderings

How to Read Your Water Bill

- David Carter provided a run through of how to read a typical Aqua Illinois bill, including covering common questions about how rates and additional chargers are calculated
- ACM asked questions specific to their bill
 - Aqua Illinois to follow up with ACM to discuss specifics
- Per ACM's question, David Carter assured AC members that customers will always be notified of any rate changes prior to them going into effect
- ACM asked question regarding fire protection charges
 - David Carter explained requirements for fire protection, including need for infrastructure, operations, maintenance, and capacity for fire protection systems
- ACM asked about "Budget Billing" style available from other utility companies, which average usage costs throughout the year to provide a more consistent bill
 - Michelle Buffenbarger to follow up with relevant Aqua Illinois information

Next Steps & Open Forum for Questions

- ACM asked if Aqua Illinois is solely responsible for sewage treatment or if sewage is sent to Lake County
 - David Carter confirmed that Aqua Illinois conducts initial treatment prior to sending to Lake County

- ACM asked if midge fly prevention could be addressed directly by Aqua Illinois, rather than local HOAs
 - Michelle Buffenbarger explained that Aqua Illinois actively does midge fly and mosquito prevention, even working with service HW has used before
 - Service includes 19 applications will take place in 2024 to eliminate both larval flies, adult flies, and mosquitos
- ACM asked how Aqua Illinois works with new developments
 - David Carter explained that when new communities are planned, Aqua Illinois will work directly with builders only after County and surrounding communities commit to development
 - ACM member then asked how scalable Aqua Illinois is in the event of new developments
 - David Carter explained that new well and water treatment plants in development will increase capacity
- ACM asked if sourcing water from Lake Michigan is possible
 - David Carter explained that Aqua Illinois is looking into the possibility and that additional charges would be needed
- ACM asked if membership could be reopened to provide opportunities to HW residents who have since shown interest in joining
 - David Carter said it will be taken into consideration
- ACM asked about possibility to make future AC meeting virtual
 - David Carter said it will be taken into consideration

Adjournment