

Flossmoor approves lake water switch, expects stable rates

BILL JONES

bjones@hfchronicle.com

Flossmoor's long-in-the-works switch to a new water source is closer to being realized.

The Village Board voted unanimously Monday, Dec. 6, to approve a water sale and purchase agreement with the Village of Homewood. The water will still come from Lake Michigan, but through Hammond, Indiana, rather than Chicago, as it does now, and via Chicago Heights instead of Harvey before it gets to Homewood.

The Homewood Village Board approved the agreement at its Dec. 14 board meeting.

The agreement includes an initial base water rate of \$4.75 per 1,000 gallons, according to a report to the board from Public Works Director John Brunke. The new rate includes Hammond's base water rate of \$2.05 per 1,000 gallons, a Chicago Heights delivery rate of \$2 per 1,000 gallons and Homewood delivery rate of \$.70 per 1,000 gallons.

"It's good to know we'll have a reasonable price for 25 years and we don't have to worry about that," Trustee George Lofton said.

"And a reasonable supplier," Trustee James Mitros added.

The overall rate marks an increase from Flossmoor's current total purchase water rate from Homewood of \$4.61 per 1,000 gallons, though Brunke said the village's team finds the rates to be "very favorable." The new rate is to take effect Jan. 1, 2023, or upon the commencement of water delivery by Chicago Heights to Homewood, whichever occurs first, according to Brunke.

Future increases are tied to the Consumer Price Index and capped at 3% annually, according to Village Manager Bridget Wachtel. Those increases will always be a minimum of 1%, per the agreement. Increases will take effect annually on the anniversary of the commencement of the new base rate, per the agreement. When the water was

coming through Chicago, the increases would fluctuate anywhere from 3% to 25% annually, Wachtel said.

"To have some stability in our rate increase is a significant win for the community," she said.

Flossmoor's new deal with Homewood is to last 25 years, which is the same term of Homewood's deal with Chicago Heights, Wachtel said. Mayor Michelle Nelson noted other options, such as Flossmoor trying to approach this change solo, could have cost \$11 million to \$13 million more.

"The cost of what we were going to have to do to go some other route was going exponentially more expensive to taxpayers, so this is a huge win for Flossmoor and all the taxpayers," Trustee Brian Driscoll added.

Trustee Gary Daggett said, "A fringe benefit of this is it's a great opportunity to strengthen our relationship with Homewood and other communities around us. All in all, it's a win for everyone involved."

Homewood is still finalizing the construction of its new water pumping station in Thornton, which is to pump water from the Chicago Heights transmission main to Homewood. With Illinois Environmental Protection Agency approvals, that water should be flowing by spring or summer of 2022, Brunke said.

Water system services

The village board voted unanimously to approve a contract to pay Strand Associates \$56,000 for technical services related to a water supply project that would see Flossmoor to get its water from Chicago Heights through Homewood.

Strand is to complete an evaluation of Flossmoor's water pumping stations to prepare for the transition. The company also will prepare a water source transition plan using the existing water system model, according to a report from Public Works Director John Brunke.

"It's exciting," Trustee James Mitros said. "The summer of (this) year — it's been a long time coming."

H-F High shifts to new approach for reading instruction

BY ERIC CRUMP

ecrump@hfchronicle.com

Homewood-Flossmoor High School will continue implementing a shift from a traditional course-based reading intervention approach to a service delivery model.

The District 233 Board of Education gave its blessing to the new program at its Dec. 14 regular meeting after the plan was brought forward by the board's Planning Committee.

Curriculum and Instruction Director Jennifer Hester told the board students sometimes have difficulty transferring skills they acquire in reading courses to content courses such as biology

or social studies. The new system attempts to address the problem by integrating reading service into content area courses.

Currently, the reading curriculum includes 328 students in 24 sections of eight courses that focus on reading fluency, writing, vocabulary and comprehension skills, according to a report provided to the board by Lauren Freeman, Reading Department chair.

The new system would shift reading instruction into content area courses, and would provide three tiers of service, depending on student needs. The first tier is reading instruction as part of the content area course. The second tier would add small group instruc-

tion, and the third tier would provide individual assistance.

Hester said the new system is designed not only to help students apply reading skills as they develop but also will increase opportunities for students in the tier 2 and 3 to take elective courses.

"It will allow students who have traditionally been placed in reading courses to enroll in more electives, which aligns with our equity work," she said. "We don't want to take away opportunities from students because we need to support them and accelerate them in another area."

Board member Michelle Hoereth asked Hester whether and how par-

ents would be included in the process.

"How much information will parents have that this is happening with their child? Will there be opportunities for them to be a partner in their kid's progress?" she said.

Hester assured her that communication with parents was part of the plan.

Superintendent Von Mansfield said the new system is a work in progress.

"There's a lot more work that we're still going to have to put into it," he said.

Development of the new system began as a pilot project in August. It will continue to ramp up in the spring, with full implementation in the 2022-23 school year.



DUNNING'S MARKET

Join the club!

DUNNING'S SUPPER CLUB

Delivered to your door!

\$45/2 meals for 2 people \$83/2 meals for 4 people

Complete meals from Dunning's Market kitchen.
Designed for YOU to cook in 45 minutes or less!

Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays (choose your delivery day)
3 to 6 p.m.

Flexible, no obligation. Decide weekly whether to opt in.

Special meals available for those with allergies, gluten-free, etc.

Order now at [DunningsMarket.com!](http://DunningsMarket.com)





Lives and works in Homewood/Flossmoor
with 25+ Years of Experience in our community

A Realtor who puts you first!

A free home warranty when you sell or purchase a home.
Call **Brenda Morgan at 708-922-1055** for details:

www.Brendajmorgan.com bjmorgan26@gmail.com

RE/MAX  **Orland Park**