

August 14, 2017

Dear Chagrin Falls Village Council,

I would like to propose an ordinance for discounted water rates for households with water predominately supplied by the Franklin Street Well Field. Most of the households effected by this ordinance would be within the Greenbrier neighborhood.

Chagrin Falls obtains its water from two main sources. The first source is the City of Cleveland.

Cleveland performs extensive treatment of Lake Erie surface water. Admittedly, Cleveland's high rates have been frustrating for many suburban communities, and have resulted in a number of suburbs pursuing other water sources (Westlake). Nevertheless, the quality of Cleveland's water is very high. Cleveland collects and tests 300 water samples per day. With 1.4 million customers, Cleveland is heavily monitored by the EPA, and the water receives comprehensive treatment including Debris Removal; Rapid Mix (carbon for odor and taste); Flocculation (Alum); Sedimentation; Filtration (sand/coal); and Disinfection (Chlorine and Orthophosphate). In addition, fluoride is added to the water. Fluoridation of drinking water reduces cavities & tooth decay, and is recommended by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control.

The other source of water for Chagrin Falls is the Franklin Street Well Field. This water is very high in iron (one sample showed 290 micrograms per liter vs an EPA secondary standard of 300).

At this level of iron, water can have a rusty color, sediment, metallic taste, and cause reddish/brown staining. The only treatment the well water receives is chlorination and the addition of orthophosphate. Mechanical filtration, recommended for this level of iron, is not performed. Potassium Permanganate is also effective in iron removal, and while this is used for by Cleveland, it is not used at the Franklin Well Field. In addition, fluoride is not added to the well source. The well water does have one major advantage, it is much cheaper for the Village than buying water from Cleveland. Because of this, the Village has publically described a plan to increase the percentage of well water, relative to Cleveland-sourced water.

The vast majority of Chagrin Falls water customers receive 70% lake and 30% well water, with the blending occurring at the Solon Road Booster Station. This blending helps keep costs down.

The well water is heavily diluted by lake water, meaning the vast majority of Village residents receive fluoridated water with relatively low levels of iron and sediment.

The exception to this arrangement is the Greenbrier neighborhood, which serves as the conduit between the well and the blending station. These residents receive 100% well water. The residents in this neighborhood periodically report discolored water; scale/buildup on faucets & shower heads; unusual odors; and poor tasting water. These characteristics are explained by high levels of iron, and the utility department has agreed that they've struggled to control "aesthetic issues from time to time." Some residents in this neighborhood have made personal investments in filtration to address water quality issues, while other residents only drink bottled water. In addition, some residents are now administering prescription fluoride treatments to their children, at the recommendation of their dentists. The sediment in well water has clogged toilet valves (requiring replacement), and sediment problems persists despite frequent attempts by the utility department to resolve via hydrant flushing.

As a resident of the Greenbrier neighborhood, I believe it is unfair that we receive inferior water, at "full price," in order that the other residents might benefit from lower costs. Chagrin Falls utility rates are amongst the highest in NE Ohio and rising (a Village resident pays 110% more per gallon of water than a resident of Avon, OH). These water rates, charged to Greenbrier residents, for minimally treated well water, are exorbitant.

I am proposing an ordinance that would reduce water rates by 75% for all households which receive more than 90% of their water supply from the Franklin Well source. The minimum water fee should also be waived. This ordinance would result in one or more of the following benefits:

1. Residents who are forced to pay for filtration systems, buy drinking water, and/or pay for fluoride treatments would have financial compensation to offset their expenses.
2. The discount would provide a quantifiable financial incentive for the Chagrin Falls Utility

1. Residents who are forced to pay for filtration systems, buy drinking water, and/or pay for fluoride treatments would have financial compensation to offset their expenses.
2. The discount would provide a quantifiable financial incentive for the Chagrin Falls Utility Department to invest in enhanced treatment at the Franklin Well source.
3. The discount would provide a quantifiable financial incentive for the Chagrin Falls Utility Department to invest in a new water main to bypass the Greenbrier neighborhood, connecting directly into the blending station. The flow from the blending station could then be reversed into the neighborhood ensuring that residents would receive equal water for equal prices.

Thank you for your consideration,
James Nerone