

Butler Eagle 11-12-2024 – Penn Township Water Survey File

Penn Township scales back plans for municipal water expansion

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The sign for the Mandell Trails mobile home park in Penn Township. Butler Eagle file photo

Penn Township is telling interested residents that it cannot expand public water service to as many residents as hoped.

Township Supervisor Samuel Ward said the Municipal Water Authority of Adams Township will not be able to extend its waterlines into most existing residential developments in Penn Township without grant assistance — assistance Ward says is unlikely to come. “So it’s not going to happen,” Ward said.

The announcement comes as the Township released the results of a survey it distributed to residents this Summer to gauge their interest in connecting their homes to a public water system.

The survey’s intent was to demonstrate to the water authority the potential demand for municipal water service in the Township. Theoretically, the more residents who showed interest, the more the average costs of water service could be brought down.

The Township reported that of the 649 households who were sent a survey, 353 responded, making a response rate of 54.4%.

When asked whether they had any interest in receiving water from a public system, 217 said yes, and 97 said no. “You can see that the results are mixed,” Ward said. “Some don’t want it. The ones that want it, you just can’t make it affordable for them. That’s not in the cards.”

When asked whether they were satisfied with the quality of the water from their current wells, 148 reported that their water quality was “good,” 83 said it was “excellent,” and 100 said it was “poor.” In addition, 303 said their well provided sufficient volume and only 22 reported that their well tended to run dry.

The water authority does plan to expand its freshwater service lines to the Mandell Trails mobile home park — formerly known as the Port-O-Call park — as well as the still-under-construction Shadow Ridge residential development.

The owners of each property will pay for the cost of extending the waterline and pass that cost onto the residents, whether they are buying or renting their property.

“Mandell Trails will charge for that waterline extension in their monthly rentals, and the individual homeowners there will pay their water service directly,” Ward said. “(For Shadow Ridge), those 24 homes will pay for the water through their monthly bills, and the upcharge to bring the line in is factored into the cost of their lots.”

The water authority already provides municipal freshwater service to a select few homes and businesses along Route 8. Aside from that, the vast majority of Penn Township residents receive their water from wells.

As a result, the township provided tips for residents on how they can keep their wells maintained and their water free of contaminants.

Aside from Penn Township, the water authority provides municipal freshwater to Adams Township, Callery, and portions of Cranberry, Forward, and Middlesex townships.