



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB Board
From:	Peter Bradley, Manager, Housing Services
Date:	February 18, 2010
Re:	Social Housing – Water Management

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board engages an Authorized Water Operator to manage the water systems situated in the DSSAB owned social housing apartment buildings in the communities of St. Charles, Noëlville, Webbwood and other locations which lack regulated / municipal water systems. The 2010 Housing Services Department budget included costing to employ an outside water management firm on an annual contract basis and this report is provided in support of that decision.

REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Describe the water management issues in three of the communities where 68 apartments rely upon well water
- Provide a viable plan to address the increased responsibility and liability aspects associated with well water management

Back Ground

The DSSAB was transferred three, two story apartment buildings located in the towns of St. Charles, Noëlville and Webbwood as part of the Social Housing Transfer. The waste water at each location is municipally serviced. However there are no municipal fresh water systems in these communities

Since the transfer the DSSAB has improved the fresh water systems in each building by replacing the original chlorine purification systems with state of the art Ultra Violet systems. These systems were professionally engineered, inspected and approved to ensure compliance with the detailed scopes of work. Additionally, the wells at each

location have been improved during recent years to ensure optimal water levels are present and pumps function appropriately. These are deep water wells.

Resulting from the Walkerton tragedy, the focus on water management has changed significantly. Buildings have been classified according to their purpose and client group. Water management responsibilities were attached to buildings and dictated to the owners in accordance with the type and nature of the water system serving the building.

DSSAB Building Custodians were required to take on new responsibilities and became water samplers. Management staff became well water administrators with the expectation of gaining full understanding of MOE Legislation and Regulations surrounding well water management. Presently, 3 Building Custodians sample water on a weekly basis under the guidance of the Maintenance Manager. Water samples are shipped to an approved laboratory and tested against MOE water regulation criteria. Weekly reports are maintained on all aspects of the sampling.

In the summer of 2009, the MOE intensified its inspection program of the non municipal sector. Two of the three DSSAB buildings were audited in 2009 and the results in both audits were similar. Given the similarity in the DSSABs approach to well water management at its buildings, a decision was taken by the MOE to defer the audit of the third building pending the hiring of an independent Consulting Engineer whose report will assess the current practices of the DSSAB.

Accordingly, to meet the MOE requirements, the DSSAB has engaged a qualified Engineer to evaluate its systems as per Regulation 170 – Section 21. The evaluation will determine:

- if minimum treatment requirements are being met;
- if **G**roundwater **U**nder the **D**irect Influence of surface water - (GUDI), 15m from a source of pollution; if GUDI may require increased treatment to include chemically assisted filtration;
- if non GUDI, present system may be acceptable.

This report is expected by the end of February 2010.

The evaluation will also dictate maintenance, operational checks, water monitoring requirements and frequency. A Certified Operator is required by Regulation 170 to: make adjustments to the system (2-2 (9) i (B)); to complete maintenance (8-2(i)); to complete operational checks; to undertake testing (8-5(i)). Staff must be trained to MOE requirements and when using trained staff they must be directly supervised by a certified operator and they must report results immediately to a certified operator. The MOE has identified March 2010 as the month by which compliance to the Engineer's recommendations must be achieved.

Issues

The Provincial water regulations are voluminous, highly technical and challenging to consistently implement. The requirement to adhere to these regulations is mandatory and the consequence of not doing so has already led to tragedy in Ontario. There are

significant liability issues attached to well water management. Proper implementation requires a specialized, knowledgeable resource in the field of Water Management.

This function is clearly beyond the job requirements when the custodians were hired. Using custodial staff creates significant training and logistical expenditures. These expenditures would need to be repeated to ensure continual updating of skills and as staff turns over.

Funding

- The 2010 Housing Services Department budget included costing to employ an outside water management firm on an annual contract basis. The cost for same was estimated to be \$36,295 for the year 2010, commencing April 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010.

Advantages of employing external provider

- Removes the responsibility and cost of training not less than 3 Custodians three backup staff and the Maintenance Manager,
- Removes all laboratory and associated reporting costs.
- Reduces Board liability related to any incomplete or improper testing
- Ensures consistent compliance with regulations across all the impacted properties.