

February 7, 2025

Mr. William Sacks, Esq.
New York State Department of Health
Division of Legal Affairs
Albany, New York

Re: Wells/Aurora Water Plant Update

Dear William:

As requested, this letter is to update the Department as to the status of some of the key circumstances surrounding the operation and possible ownership of the Wells College Water Treatment Plant (WTP) by the Village of Aurora. Since the news of the college closing in late April, the Village has stepped forward to ensure that the community will continue to be served potable water. During the fall of 2024 Wells and Aurora entered into a License Agreement that effectively turned over the operation and maintenance of the water supply beginning October 1st. That situation remains in place as of this date but it has become very clear that from both an O&M (Operation and Maintenance) perspective as well as the necessity for major capital upgrades and improvements, the Village of Aurora cannot continue to carry these costs. Essentially nothing has been done to the system infrastructure in many decades and in some cases nearly a century. All of the information provided below has been developed with the assistance and input of Barton & Loguidice Engineers of Syracuse, NY. Here's where we stand.

Village Expenditures (May 1, 2024 thru January 15, 2025) and Operational Costs

Since the Wells College closing the Village of Aurora has spent more than \$150,000 for consultant services, equipment installations (new heating system) and O&M of the WTP (employees, utilities, chemicals, etc.), all of which was not part of the existing Village budget. This out of pocket cost (with no reimbursement) has severely stressed the Village's present fiscal stability. Concerning the estimated routine O&M costs in the future, the total annual water budget will likely exceed \$300,000 compared to the present \$120,000 budget. Based on this estimate the water rates to the community residents are expected to at least double and possibly more. It is not a sustainable circumstance without assistance.

Existing Village \$ 3,000,000 WIIA Grant

Based on the previous Village project at the Long Point State Park for an entirely new WTP system (2018), the Village was granted \$ 3M. It is our understanding that this same grant money can and will be switched into the capital projects required at the Wells WTP if the Village commits and owns the plant.

NBRC Grant for New Filters

With approximately \$ 534,000 remaining in this grant and with the full transfer of the grant from Wells to the Village now completed, we are on the verge of continuing with the installation of new filters as well as other tasks. Since we had adequate funds in the grant, the NBRC thankfully is willing to fund other related items, most notably the much needed amendment to the previous Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) (2018). This grant is strictly reimbursement based and because the Village is so financially strapped, it becomes impossible to proceed with this project since there is such uncertainty at the federal level as to how quickly any reimbursements may happen. Emergency funds are needed to bridge this gap if the Village is to continue to be the operator of the WTP.

EPA Grant for New Pumps

This grant for \$200,000 (2022 +/-) was apparently forgotten and never was initiated by Wells and we are now working on making the final application to get this going. It requires a \$40,000 local match, \$32,000 of which will be funded through the NBRC grant. (The Village will still need to provide \$8,000)

Necessary Capital Projects

As mentioned earlier, the condition of the existing system is not suitable for moving forward without undertaking significant improvements. So much of it is out of date or in very poor condition. See the attached recent assessment of the facility by Ani Fish, P.E. the Cayuga County Environmental Health Director. The present water intake is only 900 LF into the Lake but more importantly is only about 20 feet below the surface. It is very vulnerable to turbidity issues and contamination. At the present WTP location we need to go out approximately 3000LF to get to a depth of 100 feet +/- (below the thermocline). This change will necessitate a new pumping and clear well system along the shoreline to get the water into the building for treatment. There the treatment will need to be modified to the latest and most effective technologies to insure protection from any and all emerging contaminants. The entire system also needs to be suitably automated with a comprehensive alarm notification system. The existing storage tank was erected in the late 1920's and clearly needs replacement as well a variety of improvements and changes to the existing campus system depending

on the future use of that area. As is the case right now, the Village of Aurora is not capable of meeting the typical "local match" requirements for most typical grant programs and with the costs noted below (which match the elements of the original project), that same situation will remain.

Project	Range of Cost
New 3000+ LF intake pipe from the lake	\$ 3,000,000
New shoreline intake vault and pumping station	\$ 750,000
New cybersecurity & overall security (fencing, alarms, lighting)	\$ 900,000
Replacement of filters with the latest filtration technology	\$ 1,250,000
Building improvements to accommodate new system	\$ 1,000,000
Upgrade to campus infrastructure (pipe, valves, hydrants..)	\$ 800,000
Contingency and miscellaneous (professional fees, etc.) (30%)	\$ 2,300,000
Total	\$ 10,000,000

As indicated by the above estimates, the forced turnover of the Wells WTP has cost the Village a very significant amount of money from the General Fund thus far and to upgrade the system will cost a great deal more. This situation cannot continue for much longer and the need for financial assistance in the immediate and long-term future is critical. With only approximately 200 users, the Village cannot afford short or long term debt service to make all the needed improvements. Even if the projects are 100% funded by non-Village funds, the users will still see a two to three fold increase in their rates due to increased O&M costs.

If you or anyone in any other governmental capacity has any questions or needs additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me. We urgently need your help and thank you.

Very truly yours,

Teter & Teter design consultants



K. TETER CONSULTING, LLC
Kenneth J. Teter, P.E.



Cc. Honorable James Orman, Mayor
Monika King, P.E., NYS Health Department
Ani Fish, P.E., Cayuga County Health Department
Thomas Blair, Attorney
Chris Lawton, P.E., Engineer at B&L
Ann Balloni, Village Clerk