



COUNCIL DIRECTION REQUEST

CDR# 2019040

Date: April 23, 2019

TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Jason MacDonald, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 23, 2019

SUBJECT: Fluoridation of Water Supply

ORIGIN: Amherst Town Council received a request from SOAR to add fluoride to the municipal water supply.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Nova Scotia Environment Act

RECOMMENDATION: That Committee of the Whole direct staff to plan and hold a public information session on the issue of community water fluoridation in early October 2019, to be followed by a community feedback / comment period ending December 2019 with a final staff report due to COW in January 2020 including a final recommendation on whether the issue should be the subject of a plebiscite in the 2020 municipal election.

BACKGROUND: Amherst Town Council received a presentation from members of the local community (SOAR) regarding the benefits of fluoridation of the water supply. At the March 18, 2019 COW the following motion was passed: *Moved by Councillor Rhindress Seconded by Councillor Jones that staff be directed to provide a report to Council outlining a public education and engagement program.*

DISCUSSION: As discussed on March 18, 2019 Council nor staff have a position on this issue at this time. We have been asked by SOAR to consider the addition of fluoride in our drinking water and we are in the process of obtaining public input on that issue. This message will have to be very clearly articulated.

Public Education and Engagement Plan

Staff suggest that a public open house be held at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Center. Details could be as follows:

1. Open house style (as opposed to presentation at podium)
2. Late afternoon to early evening to allow for most opportunity to attend
3. Town staff would facilitate the event
4. Information provided on story boards and possibly circulating on projector:
 - a. Key message from the request by SOAR
 - b. Statements on issue by World Health Organization, Health Canada, Province of Nova Scotia, American Water Works Association, etc.



- c. Data on which municipal units in NS currently fluoridate as well as provincial percentages
 - d. Possibly case study information (Calgary vs Edmonton)
 - e. List reasons some groups are opposed to fluoridation
 - f. Anticipated Water Utility costs
- 5. Provincial Department of Environment representatives can be invited
- 6. Official comment sheets should be provided - possibly in the form of a questionnaire
- 7. A decision timeline can be articulated
 - a. Public open house
 - b. Official written comment period
 - c. Further dissemination of additional information obtained
 - d. Anticipated decision date

Staff have been in contact with representatives of SOAR who have expressed a willingness to help provide information and help organize the event as they have experience with this topic.

Timing

Staff cannot organize a quality event prior to mid-June. After this time, it is generally not desirable to hold public engagement sessions until the October – November timeframe as many people are away for the summer and September is generally considered a busy month with back to school etc. Holding the engagement session in October will provide adequate time to compile information and for Council to determine how they want to proceed. A plebiscite during the municipal election on October 17, 2020 may also be appropriate.

Potential Timeline

May 2019 – August 2019 – Staff work with SOAR and the Medical Officer of Health to develop content of the Public Open House, including key messaging and notification plan.

September 2019 – Advertisement / communication of the open house

Early October 2019 – Hold Open House at CCUBIC

Mid October – Mid December 2019 – Official Public Comment Period

January 2020 COW – Staff report on community feedback

February 2020 – Council decision on how to proceed

Public Notification Plan

Over the coming months staff will develop a communication plan for the event. Staff propose the following:

- 1. Social media notices via Twitter and Facebook
- 2. Radio and TV adds
- 3. Notices in water bills
- 4. The key message will be developed and approved by the CAO
- 5. Tag line – It's your water – have a say! (example)
- 6. An official feedback / comment period and method will be developed. This will ensure all feedback is captured in a useful and measurable manner.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Fluoridation Equipment – Liquid injection

One-time cost (estimate)

Injection Equipment Cost plus installation	\$ 25,000
Fluoridation monitoring equipment plus installation	\$ 10,000
Scada monitoring programming	\$ 5,000

On-going costs (estimate)

Monthly consumable costs (\$1,000 x 12)	\$ 12,000
Annual Maintenance costs	\$ 5,000

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Community engagement has been articulated in the discussion above.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications to the use of fluoride in the municipal water supply.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: According to SOAR, studies show that fluoride in municipal drinking water promotes improved oral health which leads to an overall improvement in the health and well being of community members which results aids in the breaking of the poverty cycle. There are some members of the public that are opposed to the addition of fluoride to municipal water systems, usually based on their belief that it is a violation of the individual's right to informed consent to medication.

ALTERNATIVES: The above recommendation will allow Council to undertake public education and engagement on the issue, which would be required should Council decide to consider the addition of fluoride to the water system. As an alternative, Council could decide at this point to not proceed and inform SOAR that Council will no longer consider this request.

ATTACHMENTS: None

Report prepared by: Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO
Report and Financial approved by: