

Antrim Township approves sale of water system

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GREENCASTLE, Pa. —

After more than a year of spirited debate, the Antrim Township Board of Supervisors has approved the sale of its water system.

At Tuesday's meeting, supervisors voted to sell the Antrim Township Municipal Authority water system to the Greencastle Area Franklin County Water Authority.

G AFCWA Manager Kenneth Womack said the deal will cost the Borough of Greencastle more than \$1 million and the borough would have to assume ATMA's \$650,000 debt to the township.

Before reaching an agreement, two main issues had to be ironed out.

"One was (those) who would have been required to connect to that system under the mandatory connection ordinance — the township and the ATMA had not required them to connect previously," Womack said.

About 30 customers will be exempt from hooking onto the water system until they sell their homes.

Antrim Township Supervisor Rick Baer said the tap fee alone is \$1,231. There is also a \$50 inspection fee.

Baer said the sale could be finalized as soon as in three months.

Another stumbling block in selling the water system was the township being adequately represented on the G AFCWA.

According to Womack, under the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act, Greencastle Borough Council has the authority to pick representatives to the water authority.

However, the township will nominate two people currently serving on their water authority to fill two vacant spots on the G AFCWA. Five serve on the G AFCWA, three from the borough and two from the township.

The Greencastle system has more than 2,300 customers while the Antrim system has about 350.

The township system is permitted for 160,000 gallons per day with proposed upgrades to permit 809,280 gallons per day. The G AFCWA system is permitted for 1.6 million gallons per day.

"It took us a long way. This is a big deal," said Mike Ross, president of the Franklin County Area Development Corp.

Triggered by a \$1.25 million infrastructure development grant in 2008 to increase capacity, the idea of a merger was to create a regional water system to allow for growth in the area, according to Ross.

Ross, who attended Tuesday's meeting, said consolidating the two systems into a regional delivery of water services would allow for increased growth and projected business and industrial developments at exit 3 of Interstate 81.

With Norfolk Southern's Intermodal Terminal slated to come to Antrim Township and other developments in the works, Ross said the sale of the water system was a positive move for the future of the area.

"The Norfolk Southern project itself is projecting a \$95 million capital investment and 126 jobs, but there will be other projects that we think will occur in Antrim Township and in the borough that will further

support the economic impact," Ross said.

"The Borough Council and Antrim Township Board of Supervisors need to be commended — because this stands as a model of cooperation — not only in Franklin County, but throughout the state where two adjoining authorities were able to come together for the greater good of the community," said Ross. "In doing so, I think it will be a more efficient operation financially and operationally."