



DATE: December 5, 2017

TO: City Council

FROM: DAN MCKEEN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: Results of Advisory Vote on Community Water Fluoridation

Summary: During the recent 2017 Municipal General Election, Council sought citizen input on the issue of community water fluoridation through a non-binding advisory vote. The vote was certified by the Clallam County Auditor on November 28th with results as follows: 42.47% (2,358) in favor of fluoridation and 57.53% (3,194) opposed.

Funding: Cost for the advisory vote proposition is estimated to be \$2,500. The City Manager's proposed 2018 budget does not include any funding for the maintenance or operation of the fluoridation facilities, nor does the 2018 budget contain any funding for fluoridation supplies.

Recommendation: Approve the resolution formalizing the majority of Council's intent to adhere to the outcome of the advisory vote.

Background:

Fluoridation of the City's municipal water supply has been a debated issue in Port Angeles going back to 1951. Recognizing that the City's contractual obligation to continue fluoridation of the municipal water supply was ending on May 18, 2016, the City Council and citizens engaged in a discussion about fluoridation. Council proactively sought input on the issue of water fluoridation and on August 4, 2015, the Council adopted a three-part plan for acquiring information that it would use in deciding whether to continue fluoridation. The plan included the following:

- 1.) An education forum held October 22, 2015.
- 2.) An extended public comment session held October 29, 2015.
- 3.) Advisory poll of City water customers and PUD customers receiving fluoridated water from the City. A total 9,762 polls were sent out, one poll to each metered water account. The polls were counted in early December. There were 4,204 polls returned, with 41.27 % (1,735) in favor of fluoridation, 56.63% (2,381) opposed to fluoridation, and 88 no responses.

After receiving input from the aforementioned three sources, Council voted 4-3 at its December 15, 2015 Council meeting to continue community water fluoridation.

Between the December 15 decision and the January 5 meeting, Council received a great deal of correspondence from citizens about its decision. In addition, Council heard from a number of citizens during the Public Comment section of its January 5 meeting. Each speaker had a point of view, but many who spoke were upset that the results of the advisory poll were not the sole basis for the Council's ultimate decision.

Council listened to these comments and considered what they heard. They agreed by consensus to further discuss the matter of fluoridation at the January 19, 2016 meeting. In addition, Council directed staff to provide options for consideration; however, none of the five options provided received Council consensus, and water fluoridation continued per Council direction.

Meanwhile, City Council continued to receive communications from people who opposed fluoridation, and in some of those communications, the Council was told that unless the fluoridation vote was reversed, they were prepared to petition to change the form of our City government.

A citizens' group, Our Water-Our Choice, did go on to file a petition to change the City's classification from a noncharter code city governed by Chapter 35A RCW, to a second class city, governed by Chapter 35 RCW. Those who opposed fluoridation felt the advantage to be gained by this action was that all of the City's elected officials would be up for election at once. The petition garnered enough signatures to be certified by the Auditor, and Council subsequently chose to put the ballot measure to the voters.

Recognizing the community discontent generated by the fluoridation issue, Mayor Downie, at the July 19, 2016 meeting, brought forward a proposal to end fluoridation of the City's water supply until an advisory vote on the questions of fluoridation could come before voters.

The Council discussed Mayor Downie's proposal at the following meeting, and on August 2, 2016, in a 4-3 vote, passed the motion to:

- (1.) End fluoridation of the City's water supply, but maintain our fluoridation facilities;*
- (2.) Conduct an advisory vote on the question of fluoridation during the 2017 Municipal General Election; and*
- (3.) Council agree to adhere to the outcome of that advisory vote.*

Per Council direction, the City ceased fluoridating the City's water supply. On May 2, 2017 the City's Council approved Resolution No. 12-17 requesting that the Clallam County Auditor submit to the voters of the City, during the Municipal General Election, an advisory ballot seeking input regarding the fluoridation of the City's municipal water supply. Results of that non-binding advisory vote were certified on November 28th and are as follows:

42.47% (2,358) in favor of fluoridation and 57.53% (3,194) opposed.

It is my hope as City Manager that we can put an end to the controversy surrounding fluoridation, and for the good of the community as a whole, we can move onto the many other important needs and challenges that are facing our community. For these reasons, staff

recommends that the Council pass the proposed resolution, formalizing the majority of Council's intention to adhere to the outcome of the citizen advisory vote.

Funding Overview: Cost for the fluoridation advisory vote proposition is estimated to be \$2,500.

The City Manager's proposed 2018 budget does not include any funding for the maintenance or operation of the fluoridation facilities, nor does the 2018 budget contain any funding for fluoridation supplies. Additionally, the fluoridation facilities are now beyond their life expectancy.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION of the City Council of the City of Port Angeles, Washington, adhering to the outcome of the citizen advisory vote to stop municipal water fluoridation.

WHEREAS, on August 2, 2016, at the regular city council meeting, a motion was made by Mayor Downie and seconded by Councilmember Bruch to: (1) end fluoridation of the city's water supply, but maintain fluoridation facilities; (2) conduct an advisory vote on the question of fluoridation during the 2017 Municipal General Election; and (3) council agree to adhere to the outcome of that advisory vote.

WHEREAS, the motion stated above carried 4-3 with Councilmembers Bruch, Merideth, Whetham, and Mayor Downie voting in favor and Deputy Mayor Kidd and Councilmembers Gase and Collins voting in opposition.

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2017 at the regular City Council Meeting, the Council authorized the Clallam County Auditor to put City of Port Angeles Proposition No. 2, Fluoridation of Municipal Water Supply, on the City's November 7, 2017 Municipal General Election requesting a Yes or No vote on the question, "Shall the City of Port Angeles add fluoride to its municipal water supply?"

WHEREAS on November 28, 2017 the election results on said Proposition No. 2 were certified with 57.53% voting No and 42.47% voting Yes.

WHEREAS the City's fluoridation equipment is at the end of its useful function, and should the City continue to fluoridate there would need to be investments made in the equipment and facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Port Angeles that:

Section 1. The City Council respects the outcome of the advisory vote; and pursuant to its August 2, 2016, action, the Council will abide by the results of the advisory vote on, and therefore it declares that the City will not fluoridate the municipal water supply.

Section 2. The Council hereby finds that the City's fluoridation equipment and machinery has no commercial value, declares the equipment and machinery to be surplus, and directs staff to dispose of it in the most convenient and cost-effective manner.

Section 3. The City Council directs the City staff to have any remaining fluoridation additives removed from these facilities in a safe manner and to repurpose the building that housed the fluoridation machinery and equipment.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Port Angeles at a regular meeting of said Council held on the 5th day of December, 2017.

Patrick Downie, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

William E. Bloor, City Attorney

ATTEST:

Jennifer Veneklasen, City Clerk