

Village of Mazon Board Minutes

April 24, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Village President Jeffrey Marques at 6:03 pm on April 24, 2025.

Present: Jeff Marques, Melanie Murphy, Rachel Carrell, Dalton Misener, Kirk Houchin, Diane Punke, Roland Tondini, John Frederick, Ryan Lane, Tim Hejny

Absent: Kris Webster

J. Marques stated what would be discussed at this meeting. He began by explaining the condition of Mazon's current water treatment plant. He stated that the water treatment plant was built in 1942. They have done everything they can to keep it operational, but it is time to do something about our old outdated system. He stated that currently Mazon is meeting all EPA standards but going forward, new standards will require an updated facility. He stated that we are trying to be proactive.

J. Marques addressed a previous question as to why we do not replace the water mains within the village first. He stated that we must start at the source and move forward. The water mains would be the second phase to this project. He added that he is unsure at this time as to how soon that would get underway because there are around 9 million dollars in water mains that need replaced.

At that time, J. Marques introduced the village engineers, Tim Hejny and Ryan Lane.

T. Hejny explained the current water treatment plant is outdated and its only source of water treatment is chemical and aeration. The new plant will also use those as well but will also filter and have softening capabilities. That filtration system will allow us to remove the manganese and iron that is naturally occurring in the wells that we draw the water from. He stated that that will be the biggest improvement to the system and the source water will be of higher quality.

Ryan Lane stated that right now Mazon meets the EPA standards for manganese based on the current population but once Mazon's population surpasses 1,000 people, we would start to be in violation of that manganese. He stated, with the current treatment plant, there is nothing that can be done to filter out the manganese. He also added that another benefit of the softening system is if in the future Mazon needs deeper wells, they tend to naturally contain radium, which can then be removed with the softener.

Ryan Lane stated that the next big question is money. How much will this cost the village? He stated that there are a couple different avenues that we are looking at. IL EPA has a grant for small communities with emerging contaminants. Mazon is eligible for up to 7.295 million in funding from that grant. We estimated the new water treatment plant to cost 8.5 million if we do the softening and filtration systems. That leaves you with 1.2 million left to pay. In addition to the emerging contaminant grant, IL EPA has principal forgiveness, which is their form of an additional grant. They will forgive 50% up to 1.65 million. He stated that Mazon can potentially receive both offers. That would bring the actual cost of the village down to around \$600K.

Ryan Lane stated that if Mazon does not receive the emerging contaminants grant, we could cut the project down to the filtration system only. In which case, it would not have the softening system. He stated we would still be following guidelines after we surpass 1,000 people. We estimate the construction for that to be 3.2 million. If we got 50% forgiveness on that plan, it would cut the cost down to 1.6 million for Mazon. He added that either way you are getting what is necessary and getting a great deal.

Jeff Marques stated that overall, he wants to get the most out of these programs as possible. He added that is why they are trying for the filtration system and softening system. If the funding is out there, we should try to set ourselves up for the future as best as possible. He doesn't want anyone to look back 15 years from now and say they should have done this when they built the plant. He also stated if we decided to go ahead and borrow the larger sum of money we can, at 1.4%. The prices for these projects will only go up as time goes on.

Ryan Lane stated they don't need the softening system to filter out the manganese, but they asked the IL EPA if they still qualify for full amount even if they add in the softening. IL EPA responded with "yes, build it right". He stated that they also said to use the money and build the plant the way it should be built and set Mazon up for the future.

Jeff Marques stated that as far as the EPA authorize putting in shallow wells in, they aren't going to be authorizing it anymore. He stated that in 2016-2017, we increased our output, but we had to put a deep well in. The deep well is about 915 ft in the ground, and we draw at about 425 ft. As we need more water, we won't have the luxury of putting in a well and drawing that water from 30 ft. We will have to put another deep well in. He stated that we are fortunate that the one deep well we currently have is very low in radium, so we meet the standards. The next deep well we dig, we might not get so lucky. Therefore, if we put this whole system in, we are covered. He added that about 8 years ago when the current deep well was put in, it cost the village about 630k dollars so the next one will probably cost around 1 million dollars. Plus putting in the softening system at that time will cost more as well. The longer we wait, the more everything will cost.

Ryan Lane stated that IL EPA is going to start offering up to 40-year loans. He stated that they will have additional requirements to prove your system will last that long but there is potential to spread future costs out over longer periods. Best case scenario, the village's cost is 600k for the current plans we have, and you get the softening system.

A resident asked what the probability of getting the 7.295 million grant is. Ryan Lane responded and stated that they asked the project manager at the ILEPA. He stated that it sounds promising and they got everything in early. They have a certain budget that they set every year, and they give out the money as they see fit. It also depends on how many communities have applied for this specific grant. He added that last year they did not have a lot of communities claim this grant.

A resident asked if they give out this grant every year, and Mazon does not get it this year, will we go with the lower cost plant or will we wait and try for this grant again next year. Jeff Marques responded by saying it will depend on what they decide to give us. Once we know what we qualify for, we will then go back to discussing the best move forward. We discussed ahead of time that if we get nothing from the grant, we will more than likely wait and reapply

Jeff Marques stated that the board and himself will discuss at that time what is best for the village. He added that they may take a different avenue at that time. He stated that right now; while waiting for the list of awarded communities, it's just a guessing game. We are all on the edge of our seats waiting for June/July when we find out.

A resident asked how many deep wells can be drilled out at the well field. Jeff Marques stated that we can't put any more deep wells on the south side of the road but we could probably put 2 deep wells on the north side of the road.

A resident asked if there will be any more water storage capacity with the new system or if it will stay at 200k gal. Jeff Marques stated the storage capacity will remain the same with the 2 water towers we currently have. The resident stated that the village should think about adding a water tank in the future. He added that as long as the village is taking out money it will be cheaper to add some sort of additional water tank than to add another water tower in the future. Jeff Marques added that as we sit right now, our water storage capacity is fine. He stated that if we ever got hit with a big population boom, that's something we would have to address. He added not that a boom would be a bad thing, or even another company or 2 in the industrial park so they can lessen some of the tax burden on everyone. We look at different companies and feelers have been sent out. But we haven't been that lucky. Everything goes to Morris and Coal City.

A resident asked with our current water capacity, how much residential growth can we sustain. Jeff Marques stated that we can pump 216,000 gal per day, with an average per person per day usage, at maximum, we could sustain 2,700 people. He added that that would be pushing the pumps 24 hours a day. He stated realistically, we could add 500 more people easily.

Village Trustee, Kirk Houchin, asked if we add the softening system, what does that mean for people that currently have a home water softening system. Ryan Lane stated that the water will be softened but it probably won't be as soft as you want in your house. He stated that there will be around 25-30% raw water, after it is filtered, being blended back into the softened water. We don't want to send completely soft water out into the system because the water will be looking for minerals and the minerals will leech into the water faster. He stated that if someone wants very soft water, he recommends keeping your home system. He added that they just won't use as much salt.

A resident asked if the new plant will be at the same location. Jeff Marques responded by saying yes, the village bought the property west of the pumphouse about 10 years ago.

A resident asked if Mazon gets the grant and the addition 50% loan forgiveness, what would that look like on our monthly water bills. Jeff Marques responded that he and Melanie ran through the numbers just to get an idea of what a bill for someone might look like with this additional charge. He stated he believed the number was \$26.00, give or take a few dollars. Melanie Murphy added that this is the amount if we pay the loan off in 5 years. If our loan terms are longer then the additional charge would be less. It would be a surcharge set by ordinance and once the loan is paid off, the surcharge would come off.

Ryan Lane stated that if it was a 20-year loan, it would be around a \$5 monthly surcharge. He added that we won't know until we know what funding we will be getting.

A resident stated that if worse case scenario, he has to pay \$26 extra dollars a month for cleaner water, he thinks that it's worth it. He added that if we do the whole project now it will cost so much less than if we wait. Prices are only going up. He stated that he is all for it.

Jeff Marques stated that if we are able to move forward with this project as we have planned, construction will begin in 2026, and operational in 2027. He stated that we will be running cleaner water to town but the iron and manganese that is causing the discolored water will still be in the pipes. That means when hydrants are getting flushed or the fire department is using water, the iron and manganese will get stirred up and continue to cause discolored water. He stated that over time it may get better but until we can get to the second phase and get those old pipes replaced it is not going to magically be completely fixed.

Ryan Lane stated that that is the same with any community. Anywhere that has iron and manganese in their system, and they put in a filtration and softening system, if there is a main break or something, it's going to stir things up and cause the discoloration. He added that that is a little hiccup and not every day.

Jeff Marques stated he doesn't know how long before the village can begin the second phase. It depends on how the funding goes with this project. He stated that if best case scenario and the village only gets hit with the \$600K cost, he would start engineering the water piping system. He stated that it took about 2 years to get to the point we are at with the treatment plant. It is not something we can just decide, it has to be planned out. At that time, they might have some grant and loan programs for our water mains that we can pursue.

Tim Hejny stated that they currently have grant money available for water main projects so they will be able to pursue what they have available at that time. It will depend on what they offer but hopefully they can get funding to cover most or even all that project.

Village Trustee, Dalton Misener, asked if we are awarded this grant, does that stop us from getting future grants or are we limited in any way for any number of years. Tim Hejny responded by saying he does believe there are any limits on future grants and stated that they will be completely different grant programs specified for different things. Ryan Lane added that most grants are based on community needs. He stated that a community that is in need can get grant after grant. If the grant is available and they approve you, you're good to go.

A resident asked to get a grant for water mains, do we need our new water treatment plant in place first. Jeff Marques responded by saying we need the treatment plant first because there is no sense in putting water mains in and then sending the unfiltered water through the pipes. The manganese and iron will start to build up in the new ones.

A resident asked if the village finds out in July that they get the funding, does the board decide if they move forward. Jeff Marques stated that they already made the decision to move forward if we get all the funding we are hoping to get. If we do not get all the funding, we will go back to the meeting and hash out the next step. He added watch our website because once we get a decision we will be posting news on there.

A resident stated that when they get a decision the village should hold another meeting. Jeff Marques responded and stated that is a good idea. Village Trustee, Diane Punke, added that our village meetings are the 2nd and 4th Mondays on every month at 6pm located at the village hall and they are open to the public. Everyone is always welcome.

Jeff Marques thanked the public for coming to this informational meeting and we will let you know in a couple months how we will move forward.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.