



## **Tom Kane—Water Service: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **TOM KANE: WATER IMPROVEMENTS**

The City of Dubuque (City) is acquiring the Vernon water system, including your Highway 20 property, from Central Iowa Water Association (CIWA). Central Iowa Water Association will assign your service agreement to the City of Dubuque. The existing Vernon system, including your Highway 20 property, will be connected directly to the City's municipal water system on or before December 31, 2017.

#### **What happens when the City acquires the Vernon system?**

The City's Water Department will own, operate, and maintain the private water system. The City will be responsible for the maintenance, repair, and operation of the water system in compliance with all applicable county, state, and federal requirements.

#### **When will this transfer happen?**

The City will provide water service to you and all Vernon system customers through the existing Vernon water system beginning December 13, 2016, as part of its acquisition of the Vernon system.

The City of Dubuque will connect the Vernon water system to the City's municipal water system on or before December 31, 2017.

#### **What happens then?**

Immediately following the transfer of ownership, the City Water Department will install a water meter at your Highway 20 property. The City will send its first water bill on or around January 9, 2017, and this bill will reflect your actual water usage for the month of December. Bills will reflect actual water usage moving forward as well.

Other than the newly installed water meter, the only change is the improved water service provided by the City of Dubuque. Septic systems remain private. All other service costs remain the same. Property taxes remain the same. Public safety services continue to be provided by the Dubuque County Sheriff's Department and the Fire Department currently serving the property. Refuse collection and snow removal remain private services. Street maintenance and repair remain private expenses. The City of Dubuque will provide no other services through this transaction, nor will it have any other presence at the Highway 20 property through this transaction.

#### **What will I pay for City water?**

Property owners will pay the 1.5 times the standard rate charged to residential water customers in the city of Dubuque. The typical Dubuque household of four uses 6,000 gallons of water, and the average monthly water bill is \$29.53. The service fee at 1.5 times the standard rate equates to \$44.30 per month for 6,000 gallons of water. These numbers reflect the current fiscal year 2017 water rates.

Since a water meter will be installed immediately at the Highway 20 property upon transfer of ownership to the City, your bills will reflect 1.5 times the standard rate for your actual water usage from the beginning of your billing relationship with the City.

The City will send its first water bill will on or around January 9, 2017, and subsequent bills will arrive on a monthly basis.

**Do I have to sign a pre-annexation agreement to receive City water?**

It is not necessary to sign a pre-annexation at the existing Highway 20 property to receive City water. The City presently has no plans to annex the Highway 20 property. This transaction is a water system purchase only. The agreement between the City and CIWA states:

Unless the customers described herein, or their successors in interest, voluntarily sign a petition for annexation, the present Dubuque City Council agrees that it will not attempt to annex such customers prior to January 1, 2018. Dubuque does not have any present plan or intention to annex the property owned by customers described herein. The present Dubuque City Council states as a matter of policy, and in a good faith effort to resolve pending litigation regarding such customers, that the City of Dubuque should not annex such customers via either an involuntary or 80/20 annexation proceeding.

If the city council of the City of Dubuque changes its policy, CIWA would have no right to claim the City breached this agreement.

**Do I need a City water meter?**

Yes, the City will install, or contract licensed plumbers to install, a water meter at the Highway 20 property immediately following the transfer of ownership of the CIWA system. The one-inch diameter or smaller water meter (one per service line) at the existing Highway 20 property will be installed at the City's expense.

**Will I have a water connection fee to connect to City water?**

No, you will not pay a water connection fee to connect the Highway 20 property to City water.

**Who maintains the water service lines?**

The City Water Department will maintain the public water mains (typically located in the street). A property owner maintains the water service line from the public water main up to and including the control valve (stop box) and further servicing his or her property.

Control Valve (stop box) and Valve Boxes:

The covers of stop boxes and valve boxes must be the same height as the sidewalk or the surrounding ground. While the City operates and maintains the stop boxes, property owners must ensure that stop boxes are readily accessible at all times.

Maintenance of Control Valve (stop box) by Property Owner:

The control valve (stop box) must be in good condition and ready for use at all times. If a property owner does not maintain the stop box in proper condition, if the stop box fills up with debris, or the control valve (stop box) needs repair at any time, the City will clean or repair the control valve (stop box) without giving notice to the property owner. The City's cleaning and repair exceed routine operation and maintenance, and the cost will be billed to the property owner. If the property owner refuses to pay those costs, water service may be turned off until payment is made.

Installation and Maintenance at Expense of Property Owner:

All service connections from the control valve (stop box) to a house or building are installed and maintained at the expense of the property owners served by those connections.

**What happens to the connection between the Ferring Water System and the Highway 20 Property?**

The Iowa plumbing code requires a separation between the Ferring Water System and CIWA (and now City) water system. This requirement exists for the CIWA systems and remains in effect after the transfer of ownership and connection to the City water system.

**What is the quality of City water?**

The Water Department is dedicated to producing and delivering drinking water that complies with all state and federal drinking water standards. As regulations and drinking water standards change, Dubuque continually strives to adopt new and better methods of delivering the best quality drinking water. Dubuque commits to incorporate these changes system-wide in an expeditious and cost-effective manner.

The Eagle Point Water Treatment Plant is supplied by five shallow and four deep wells and does not use water from the Mississippi River. The Water Department delivers high-quality water that complies with all standards set forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Over 200 tests a day are performed by water treatment plant operators.

In addition to these tests, the Dubuque Water & Resource Recovery Center Laboratory performs over 60 bacteriological analyses of City drinking water on a monthly basis. Other compliance-related testing is performed by the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory and Keystone Laboratories. All these analytical measures ensure that the City water reaching your home is safe to drink.

**Do I need a water softener?**

Dubuque water customers do not need to soften their water. The Eagle Point Water Treatment Plant is a lime softening plant. Starting with groundwater that is virtually free of sediment, the lime softening process reduces the total hardness from about 280 mg/L to 100 mg/L. The estimated savings on softening costs for a recipient of Dubuque water is \$17.60 per month, or \$211.20 per year, including electricity and amortization costs of the softening unit.

For more information on City water services, call (563) 589-4291 or visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/Water](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/Water)