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Sheboygan Common Council approves \$3.1 bond to start water intake overhaul

Diana Dombrowski Sheboygan Press USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

SHEBOYGAN - All water supplied to Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls and Kohler passes through two intake pipelines. One, a 36-inch pipe, was installed in 1959. Another, a 30-inch pipe, dates to 1909.

If the 1909 pipe failed, the 1959 pipe, on its own, would struggle to support the local water system.

If the 1959 pipe failed, the 1909 pipe wouldn't be able to keep up.

So the Common Council unanimously approved the sale of \$3.1 million in short-term bonds last week, which will help finance the engineering phase of an eventual \$29 million

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overhaul of Sheboygan's water intake system that is expected to increase residents' water rates.

The project, which should be completed in 2024, will include new intake pipelines, a shore well and pumping station.

The pipelines from 1909 and 1959 stretch thousands of feet out into Lake Michigan, bringing water to the shore well, and the low-lift pumping station pumps the water through the treatment process.

The new pumping station will be built on land north of the water treatment plant. Mayor Mike Vandersteen said in a statement on the city website the pump station would displace a disc golf hole at Vollrath Park, but said the course could be routed around the new station.

Joe Trueblood, Sheboygan's Water Utility Superintendent, said replacing both pipelines will allow for higher-capacity, ice-resistant lines that go farther out into the lake.

'Although the project will be costly, critical water infrastructure is an investment in ongoing and future reliability in the supply of safe drinking water to the community,' Mayor Mike Vandersteen said in a letter to The Sheboygan Press.

The Water Utility will apply for a longer-term loan through the state's drinking water project loan program to finance the rest of the project. Increases in water rates are also expected.

Work could begin as early as 2022.

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