
From: Kaffer, Nancy <nkaffer@freepress.com>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 5:14 PM
To: Wurfel, Sara (GOV)
Subject: RE: Flint water

Here's another story, about Darnell overseeing the process to get permission to pull water from the Flint River.

Flint Journal (Michigan)

April 6, 2014 Sunday
1 EDITION

Rushing to fix dump

LENGTH: 862 words

By Ron Fonger
rfonger1@mlive.com

After the state spent a dozen years trying to force Flint officials to clean up an unlicensed dump on Bray Road, the city is making a last-minute scramble to get that work done.

The reason? The city wants to use the same property in Genesee Township to dump sludge that will come when Flint makes the switch to the Flint River for the city's drinking water.

Flint and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality have signed off on a consent order that requires the city to investigate and clean up what has been dumped at the 40-acre property. The requirement is a condition of using the site to dispose of lime sludge from the water treatment process.

The sludge is an unavoidable byproduct of softening river water before delivering it to homes and businesses, a move the city said it plans to make by the middle of this month.

"It is something the city has needed to take care of," said Jim Arduin, senior geologist in the DEQ's Office of Waste Management and Radiological Protection. "It's been on our radar for a long time -- at least 10 years."

The consent agreement for the Bray Road property, just north of Carpenter Road, and a series of letters dating to 1997 between the state and Flint officials were obtained by The Flint Journal/MLive.com through the Freedom of Information Act.

Flint Utilities Administrator Daughtery Johnson said the city hasn't used the property for sludge disposal since the 1960s but has dumped construction waste -- mostly broken concrete -- there.

Johnson said the city spent about \$10,000 on an initial round of testing at the site to demonstrate the waste wasn't contaminated, but Flint wasn't able to meet all the DEQ's demands, including taking the solid waste to a licensed disposal facility.

He said the city's financial problems were the primary reason for past inaction.

Cost of compliance unclear

The 21-page consent agreement includes \$2,500 in fines, in addition to the price of investigating and possibly moving or capping material at the dump.

City officials said it's not yet clear how much it will cost to comply with the consent order, but See dump, A12 dump they have few alternatives as they prepare to break away from buying water from the city of Detroit.

Without a place to send the lime sludge, Flint couldn't clean up its river water, and the Bray Road property already is connected to the treatment plant through miles of underground pipe.

The lagoon system on the property has two holding areas -- one to "dewater" the sludge and another from which the waste is pumped and treated with other sewage.

Arduin said little is known about the contents or volume of waste at the Bray Road property, leading to the consent order

requirement that the city determine what is in the open dump, remove or properly dispose of the waste on site and eliminate any surface water discharge to the Cornwell Drain.

The consent agreement said the lagoon system for handling lime sludge includes discharge points to the drain, and the property also includes an area where solid waste has been disposed of on the surface.

Arduin agreed that much of that waste appears to be asphalt and concrete -- byproducts of Flint's street maintenance and public works departments.

The consent order also requires the city to secure the property, which is at least partially bordered by a chain-link fence, plug the surface water discharge to Cornwell Drain, file a construction permit application for the lime sludge treatment, survey the property and report the extent of solid waste there, including any environmental contamination.

Worry for homeowners

The order clears the way for Flint to gain state approval of Flint River withdrawals and disposal of the waste -- and officials appear to be keenly focused on the work.

Just last week, the site, which had been quiet for decades, was busy again with trucks, heavy equipment and workers on the ground.

Neighbor James Lee said dumps in the area, near Bluebell Beach, are a gray cloud over homeowners -- as are plans to bring fresh sludge to the property.

"Nobody knows what was put in it before they shut it down," said Lee, who has lived on Bray Road for 25 years. "It is a constant worry."

Genesee County Drain Commissioner Jeff Wright, whose office oversees the Cornwell Drain, said he doesn't believe the property has an unmanageable environmental problem.

"I think what they are going to do is improve the situation," he said. "What they are doing is going to make the overall situation better."

The consent agreement comes as Flint officials play a game of beat the clock in disconnecting from the Detroit water supply and beginning to draw water from the Flint River instead.

Emergency Manager Darnell Earley said Friday he expects the city to have its permit allowing for river water withdrawals to start this week, and Arduin said that could not have happened without resolving the Bray Road dump issues.

Flint officials have said their plan is for people in the city to drink Flint River water until the Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline project is complete in 2016.

Genesee County and Flint have signed capacity agreements, committing to buy water from the KWA in the future.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Wurfel, Sara (GOV) [mailto:Wurfels@michigan.gov]

Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 5:09 PM

To: Kaffer, Nancy <nkaffer@freepress.com>

Subject: Re: Flint water

Ed Kurtz was the EM at the time. Important to remember that the emergency manager had the final say - with ultimate

sign off by Treasury-on making the change, but also did so at the strong urging of Flint city leaders. This was not a decision that was forced upon the city. Exact opposite actually.

Emergency managers often try to work closely with mayors and city councils, getting recommendations from the local communities they are serving. The decision to make the switch during the construction of the Karegnondi pipeline came after an 8-1 vote by the City Council and strong endorsement by the mayor and Genesee County leaders. The move also came after a series of upgrades to Flint's water treatment plant, testing and an independent analysis of water rates and quality.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Sep 25, 2015, at 4:14 PM, Kaffer, Nancy <nkaffer@freepress.com> wrote:

>

> Deadline question for a column due today. :)

>

> _____

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> -----Original Message-----

> From: Kaffer, Nancy

> Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 2:54 PM

> To: 'Wurfel, Sara (GOV)' <Wurfels@michigan.gov>

> Subject: RE: Flint water

>

> Hi Sara - A little confused by your response. Not sure if Darnell Earley was EM when the decision was made to use Flint River -- It may have been Michael Brown? He was EM when the decision was made to join the Karegnondi Water Authority but I'm not sure about the decision to switch to Flint River water and stop using DWSD, but regardless, he's an EM appointed by the governor -- but I'm unclear why you guys would sign off on something as important about the integrity of an entire city's water supply if you had "severe reservations"? Any light you could shed on that would be much appreciated.

>

> Also, not clear what the Genesee Board of Commissioners has to do with it? They're a separate water customer and have continued to use DWSD while Karegnondi is under construction.

>

> Our data analyst has been in contact with HHS. Story on that is forthcoming.

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> _____

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> -----Original Message-----

> From: Wurfel, Sara (GOV) [mailto:Wurfels@michigan.gov]

> Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2015 4:26 PM
> To: Kaffer, Nancy <nkaffer@freepress.com>
> Subject: Re: Flint water
>
> Just so you know ... that's not accurate history, Nancy. This change
> was pushed and direct request of Genesee Co Board of Commissioners AND
> city council (7-1) and mayor at the time. We had severe reservations
> about switch but ultimately was nearly unanimous request from local
> local level that Treasury signed off on. (And FYI double checking, but
> nearly certain EM at time was not Darnell E.)
>
> Not that any of that matters, Nancy.
> The bottom line is that we have been working hard to do everything possible to play a supportive role and work in
collaborative fashion across all levels of government with community, faith & business leaders, residents, etc.
>
> Protecting public health is paramount and safe, clean, accessible drinking water is essential. That's what we solely
focused on helping ensure.
>
> Highly recommend you reach out to state Health & Human Services team for how this data set was spliced and diced.
That's key to understanding. They can walk through for you and Freep team.
>
> Thanks much,
> SW
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Sep 24, 2015, at 3:37 PM, Kaffer, Nancy <nkaffer@freepress.com<mailto:nkaffer@freepress.com>> wrote:
>
> Hey Sara - comment on this elevated lead in the Flint water system? Specifically because the Flint EM is the one who
made the decision to hook up to the Flint ... the same Flint EM who is now DPS EM, correct?
>
> _____
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