REGIONAL WATER FAQ'S

COST

What is the overall cost for this regional water project?	Estimated project cost is ~$4.5M. Elmore's share is estimated to be ~ $750,000. The Ottawa County Commissioners have committed ARPA (America Rescue Plan Act) funds to cover the difference because they recognize that this project will positively impact Elmore and the County in both near and long-terms. In early December, 2021, Ottawa County received a $2M H.B.168 grant for this project. Elmore has applied for grants and no/low interest loans to fund our share and has capital funds available if needed.
Is today's project cost higher or lower than past costs?	Today's costs are higher than cost estimates discussed years ago. Unique funding opportunities) (e.g., ARPA funding) makes the project feasible.
Will the project price go up or down in the future?	Like everything, the overall project price will increase over time. That said, without the ARPA money, the cost to the Village will be prohibitive and the Village will face multi-million-dollar costs to improve our water plants to 1) remain compliant with ever-more stringent EPA requirements and 2) handle capacity demands to support Elmore's future growth.
What are expected costs to operate and maintain village water in the face of ever-more stringent requirements?	The costs will continue to increase with inflation and regulatory obligations. Cost estimates for the Village to upgrade the current plant with new equipment and new wells (e.g., Dischinger Farm wells) are currently projected to be $2.4M. Building a new water plant with new wells will cost $7.5 to $9.2 million to complete.
What is the monthly, per-user cost for regional water? How does this compare to current and expected future costs?	The current average the monthly, per-user cost for village water is $40. This includes treatment, operations and maintenance. Regional Water future expected average monthly, per-user cost is estimated to be $34. This includes $23 for water supply, $3 for debt

	service related to the project, and $8 for operations and maintenance of Elmore's distribution system. Upgrading our existing system (water treatment plant and wells) will lead to costs increases beyond our current rates. Two options: 1. Improving existing water treatment plan and wells: $49 average the monthly, per-user ($40 current rate plus $9 debt service to pay for improvements) 2. New ION Exchange treatment plant: $64 average the monthly, per-user ($40 current rate plus $24 for debt service to pay for new plant) Further, continuing with our local water system, our water rates will increase to keep pace with ever-increasing operations and maintenance costs. For example, a 2019 study found that we needed to increase rates by 12% over 4 years. This trend is unlikely to reverse in the future. For example, in 2021 alone certain chemical costs have increased as much as 300% ($.70 per gallon to $2.10 per gallon)
What will regional water cost Elmore users per gallon?	Elmore = $0.009/gal. Anticipated OCRW=$0.003/gal.
Will there be any new fees from the County users will have to pay?	No new, additional, up-front fees will be levied by the county.
Will any current water fees be reduced? Eliminated? Increased?	Treatment costs will be reduced, since OCRW will supply treated water. Employee costs will remain unchanged since we will retain current employees to care for our water distribution lines. As displayed above, we will incur a small increase in debt service (~$3/month/user), which is significantly lower than the debt service likely to be incurred for upgrades to our existing system ($9/month/user) or building a new ION Exchange treatment plant ($24/month/user).

Have regional water rates gone up or down over the years?	OCRW rates have been very stable over the years. Given OCRW's size and capability, it is able to leverage economies of scale and absorb cost increases better than our small plant, thus minimizing the impact of future cost and regulatory increases.
What are the likely rate projections for regional water?	A rate increase is not projected for 2022. The need for any future rate increase is formally determined in November of each year. A billing adjustment committee exists and the Village is able to attend.
Can prices rise without our consent?	The Village of Elmore will be an OCRW customer. As such, we will be subject to the same rate increases as the entire Ottawa County Regional Water Distribution System. This is no different than our customer status for electricity, gas, cable, fiber, telecommunications, and other critical utilities.
What will we do with the money we save on treatment?	Money saved will be dedicated to operations and maintenance of our distribution lines, which we will continue to own and operate.

GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

Today Elmore controls all aspects of our water (source, treatment, distribution, etc.). How will this change under regional water?	Source, Treatment & County Distribution will be managed by the county. The water main from the Harris tower to the village corporation limit including the water meter is the County's responsibility. Downstream of the water meter, the pressure reducing valve and the village distribution system is the village's responsibility, and will be managed by the village.
How long is the proposed agreement?	30 Years
Why isn't keeping local control better now and forever?	Local control has both positives and negatives. For example, we are customers of electric power and gas companies. We don't have "local control" but we also do not have to source,

	generate, or otherwise produce the electricity or gas that are critical to the Village. The County water treatment option offers 1) economies of scale, 2) additional capacity and 3) a higher level of treatment expertise with a Class IV water treatment plant. Given the EPA's oversight and ever-more-restrictive / expensive EPA regulations, and our small size, we are at high risk of being unable to afford to successfully operate our own complete water system.

QUALITY

How does regional water quality compare to Elmore water?	Ottawa County's water quality is excellent. Water from both systems must meet OEPA requirements/guidelines for water quality. Ohio EPA's NWDO (419-352-8461) can be contacted for detailed information.
I've heard surface water takes more treatment to be potable. Is this true?	Typically, surface water requires more treatment and filtration than ground water. The Great Lakes, including Lake Erie are considered an excellent water source for surface water systems. The Ottawa County Regional Water Treatment Plant is a top-notch Class IV, conventional surface water treatment plant with highly trained and qualified staff, and strong relationships with various universities and other agencies focused on Lake Erie and its surrounding waters' current and future water quality. The plant's proactive, 24/7 monitoring of water from before the intakes and throughout its treatment and transmission systems are far beyond Elmore's capability. It provides early warning for any potential variances and enables early response to eliminate/mitigate problems.

If true, what are the risks of this additional treatment to consumers? Pipes, pumps and other infrastructure?	For decades, people have been safely consuming surface water produced by OCRW. Risks associated with the treatment system of a large supply provider (OCRW) are arguably less than with a small village's treatment system due to its higher rated class of service (class IV versus class II), highly trained, dedicated staffing for operations and maintenance, more modern, sophisticated systems, in-house availability of standby equipment, financial reserves, and myriad other variables.
What do we have to do to prepare our storage and distribution system? What will that cost?	The Village is currently readying for a 12-to-18-month study to support the changeover, as required by OEPA. The cost of this study is anticipated to be $25,000 to $30,000. The study will identify any distribution system improvements and associated costs needed to prepare for the change from a treated ground water supply to a treated surface water supply.
The lake gets toxic algae blooms. How can we be sure these won't harm users, disrupt service, cause rate increases or other problems?	OCRW is a leader in the detection and treatment of algae bloom and similar factors. Ottawa County set the standard for algae treatment before Northwest Ohio had any issues. OCRW monitors water conditions far from the intakes, to detect rising levels, and are able to adjust treatment to eliminate potential threats. In addition to their own monitoring OCRW also partners with other water producers, EPA, several universities, and others to ensure they have robust, timely information that enables them to get ahead of any potential concerns. There have been no service disruptions to the regional water system from toxic algae blooms. The water plant has been designed and operated to address and treat the various pollutants typically found in Lake Erie. The water plant and its staff have an excellent operations record. Its robust, redundant systems, including multi-intakes along the lake and Portage River, minimize the potential for service interruptions.
What are regional water's historical quality report results?	Annual drinking water consumer confidence reports can be found at this link: https://www.co.ottawa.oh.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=38

Has any regional water user ever had service interrupted due to quality issues? If so, please describe interruption, duration, solution, impact, and timeline.	A valve failure at the water treatment plant in the early 2000's caused turbity (cloudiness) levels to increase to 1.2 (within acceptable range but high) prompting a system-wide boil advisory for 2 days. The electronics controlling the valve were repaired and the manual check process procedure was enhanced. There have been no other issues since then other than boil advisories issued for occasional water main breaks outside the plant in the transmission or local distribution lines.
Will we still have some issues with minerals on fixtures? Perrysburg does with Toledo water.	The likelihood of this issue will be reduced.

VOLUME

How much water will we get from regional water?	As much as needed. The plant's current capacity is 9 million gallons, and its average use is just over 6 million gallons. The plant is expandable to 18 million gallons.

PRESSURE

What is the water pressure we will get from regional water? How does that compare to our current pressure? What impact will that have on our storage and distribution infrastructure?	Water leaves the plant at higher pressure than Elmore uses. The data provides that the current pressure is a minimum of 65 lbs. The Village of Elmore water pressure is at 45 lbs. A pressure reducing valve will be installed to bring the pressure down to our needs, and thus minimize pressure-related risks to our storage and distribution systems.
What if we need to raise /lower the pressure?	The operation of the pressure reducing valve will be at the discretion and control of the village.

TIMING

When does the final decision have to be made?	The general plan is expected to be presented to Village Council early Q1 2022 for decision.

If approved, when will the project start?	Estimated start date is September 1, 2022 but will be impacted by funding source timing and decisions.
Once started, how long before it is complete?	Estimated completion date is April 1, 2024

FLEXIBILITY

How flexible is regional water to meet changing (+/-) volume, pressure, and quality needs?	The County is required to comply with Ohio EPA water treatment requirements with regard to quality. Pressure will be regulated by the Village operation of the pressure reducing valve. The plant currently has far more volume capacity available than we expect to ever need. When total system demand is +/- 1.5million gallons per day of current capacity plant expansion would be considered.

STAFFING

Will we have to let any current employees go, or hire more people if we opt for regional water? If so, why?	We do not expect to change our current staffing levels up or down.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Who do users call for questions, concerns?	Customers of the village distribution system will first call the village as the local distributer of the water to its own customers. If a system wide issue exists that the village believes is an issue with the water being supplied by the county, then the village would contact the county. The Water Superintendent is Ron Wetzel (419) 734-7312. The Sanitary Engineer is Kelly Frey (419) 734-6725.
What is OCRW's reputation for customer service?	Very good. Many of Ottawa County's customers are seasonal residents and complement the department for quality and responsiveness.

REGIONAL WATER FAQ'S

STATUS OF CURRENT WELLS

Can our current wells produce the volume of water we need? How much growth can our current wells support?	Our wells can provide the volume we need today but future capacity to support growth and economic development is uncertain. OCRW can provide the water volume to support future growth and economic development.

TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNICATION

What is the plan to keep the public and all parties informed, ensure transparency, and opportunity for public comment?	Village and Ottawa County personnel are available via phone, email, or in person to answer questions.

GENERAL

What other communities are in regional water?	Port Clinton & Oak Harbor are participants. Seven Townships (Catawba Island, Danbury, Portage, Erie, Bay, Salem, Harris) are customers of the distributions system; Emergency Service Connections are available to Carrol Township and the Village of Marblehead. Various township residents are connected to OCRW as individual customers.

Water quality during the changeover?	There will be a slight noticeable change perhaps in the color of the water due to the water chemistry of surface water vs. ground water. The chemistry of the water may remove some sediments that line our distribution pipes. This is normal. The Village and OCRW are aware of this and taking all possible actions to alleviate and remove this possibility before the changeover.
Will our billing process change?	No.
Will there be a service interruption during the project or when switching over? If so, how long?	No service interruptions are expected due to this transition. If unexpected interruptions arise, we will notify impacted residents via our normal methods.
How/when will users be notified of the switch?	Multiple notification methods, including billing cycle inserts, social media, Village website, door to door, and/or other systems if needed will be used.
What impact will this have on economic development/growth?	Having this water infrastructure in place is a notable positive for economic development and growth. The more infrastructure already in place, the more attractive a property is to developers. Why is this important? The Village's long-term vitality depends on growth that both honors and compliments our past and current attributes and character.
How will annexed properties on Portage River South (to the east) connect in?	These properties will be offered the opportunity to join the OCRW as individual customers.
How will annexed properties on Portage River South get fire hydrants and shouldn't they have them? Who will control the hydrants?	Hydrants will be installed as part of this project at points 250 feet apart from Materion to the Village Limits and will be controlled by OCRW. The Village will be installing hydrants on Rice and Clinton St. along the path of the intake into the water plant.
Can the properties recently annexed on Portage River South (to the east) keep their wells? Will the health department allow this? Does the village of Elmore allow this? Would anyone in the village then be allowed to put in a well?	Yes, if the county approves individual well permits and the property owner bears the cost of installation and maintenance This said, there may EPA and other regulations (e.g., co-mingling water etc.) that impact a property owners' decision.

	diligent efforts to find and fix leaks has reduced this from a recent high of 40% (due to three major leaks).
How will this effect fire hydrants and existing water lines?	Changing to OCRW water supply should not have an effect on existing fire hydrants other than a potential increase in the volume of water available for fire protection.
What is our water loss percentage in the village now? Won't we be paying for a lot of water now if we have a leaky system?	The current loss s approximately 12%. This is better than the generally accepted 15% standard, typical of water systems. Elmore's