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June 30 at 11:34 AM ·

CLOSED DOOR MEETING ON WATER TOWER. As a result of questions raised about the commissioned water tower study at our last council meeting it was agreed to have some objective eyes review the report and to have the Fire Chiefs from St. Boni and Mound provide guidance on water storage needs for fire suppression. Fire suppression has been the primary reason given in the past for the urgency of a new water tower in the SW sector of the city but recent fire flow tests in that area have shown adequate flow rates well within standard requirements.

As the city council liaison on both the Mound and St. Boni Fire Commissions I informed the City Administrator that I expected to attend any meeting that was called with the two Fire Chiefs on this matter, my goal being to observe and ensure transparency. I was told, in no uncertain terms, he didn't want me to attend and then I learned he met with both Fire Chiefs yesterday without informing me of the meeting. Not surprised. Millions are on the table and transparency will take a back seat.

As a council member and Minnetrista taxpayer I want to make sure we make decisions on infrastructure projects like this using unbiased advice from entities that don't stand to profit from resulting contracts. If we legitimately need a water tower to support the SW area then we should build it but when the city insists on closed door meetings and intentionally avoids transparency it can't help but breed distrust.

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June 14 at 2:22 PM ·

IF AND WHEN MINNETRISTA NEEDS ANOTHER WATER TOWER. A year ago we were told we desperately needed a new water tower in the southwest corner for fire suppression in the Hunters Crest area. We were told the hydrants there were only putting out 500 gallons per minute (gpm) which wasn't sufficient and water tanker trucks were still needed for fire calls there. Turns out that's not true. I requested we have the hydrants tested for flow rates and the report we received actually shows flow rates there of 1000-1200 gpm. So it appears the urgency is no longer an emergency. Don't expect the urgency to go away though...there are millions of dollars at stake here and we will still see a frantic push to buy land and build a tower anyway. You'll hear that we urgently need it for future population growth but the historically exaggerated population numbers used (see pop growth chart), even if accepted as accurate, show that need isn't until 2030 if (and that's a big if) that growth materializes.

If those inflated population numbers don't materialize after the city purchases revenue bonds (which are normally paid back with user fees) it will be all Minnetrista taxpayers left holding the bag. We need to make sure, before spending millions on a huge infrastructure project like this, that we are making decisions based on accurate, factual information and not on overblown predictions that may never materialize. We can't let vendors pressure the city to line their pockets and cause Minnetrista to take on growth just to pay off debt.