

Hadley puts water-system extensions on hold

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1934
HADLEY — No extensions to the town's water system will be allowed until at least October, as consultants determine how to address an aging system and how to handle a growing demand for water.

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday voted the temporary moratorium unanimously, following a recommendation made by consulting engineers Comprehensive Environmental Inc. of Milford.

The moratorium won't affect simple tie-ins to the system, as in the case of a new house being built on a street that already has sewer lines.

However, it will prevent extensions on subdivisions, including a 50-home development proposed off Moody Bridge Road.

Eileen Pannetier, a consultant with the company, told selectmen that the town should restrict all extensions to its water system until a master plan outlines priorities. The Milford consultants expect to file a draft by August, and will outline capital improvements that are needed and

20-year projections on water use.

The engineers learned that Hadley is close to its maximum allowable drawdown on the Mount Warner wells of 790,000 gallons per day. Over the past five years, the town has averaged a daily drawdown of 770,000 gallons.

Besides going above the limits permitted by the state's Department of Environmental Protection, the town also is concerned about the integrity of the pumps and pipes that are part of its water system and what capacity they can deliver.

Water Superintendent Michael Klimoski said some days in July, August and September have exceeded 1.2 million gallons of water use, and almost every day during those three months the usage exceeds the average allowable drawdown of 790,000 gallons.

When daily water use gets above 1 million gallons, it could pose problems for the Hadley Fire Department in the case of a fire.

David Kvinge, another consultant with Comprehensive Environmental, recommended that town officials go forward

with a process of increasing the permitted drawdown. This process requires the town to appeal to both the Department of Environmental Management and Department of Environmental Protection and usually takes more than a year, Kvinge said.

Klimoski said another way to reduce strains would be to tie the Callahan wells on Bay Road into the town's regular water system. However, this water, with high levels of naturally occurring manganese that discolor water, would have to be treated and the town would likely have to invest portions of its \$700,000 in water reserves to pay for this ongoing expense.

Because the town went over its average daily allowable capacity in 2001, when the town's firefighters helped battle a forest fire on Mount Holyoke, an administrative consent order issued by the Department of Environmental Management required Klimoski to report monthly on the amount of water pumped, install leak-detection devices, make repairs and educate employees and the community about water-saving measures.

One of these was implemented Wednesday as selectmen unanimously voted to begin the even- and odd-day water ban. Under the ban, residents living at odd-numbered addresses should only water their lawns and gardens on odd days of the month, while those in even-numbered homes should only water on even days of the month.