

Sheldon Dunes Community Water System – Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers have been reviewed using the best information available at the time, including professional engineering input, legal guidance, and historical Township records. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and clarity, the information provided is subject to change as additional data, regulatory requirements, or professional recommendations become available. This document is informational only and should not be interpreted as a final determination or binding commitment by Port Sheldon Township.

Q: Why is this review of Sheldon Dunes' aging (50+ year old) Community Water Well System happening now?

A: Ongoing resident complaints regarding water quality (iron), low pressure at various points in the system, lack of firefighting ability, and the Township's work on long-term asset management and capital improvement planning. The system's age also requires updated evaluation of replacement costs and options to prepare for failures.

Q: Why did Port Sheldon Township pay for the Engineering Study without notifying homeowners?

A: While not required, all such actions occurred during publicly posted Township meetings, consistent with standard procedure for managing long term assets. The board may engage professional engineers to gather data to effectively maintain and manage the system.

Q: What is a Special Assessment District (SAD) and how would it apply?

A: A SAD funds improvements that benefit a specific neighborhood rather than the entire township.

Q: Do all deeded owners need to sign an SAD petition?

A: Yes. All individuals or authorized signatories (trusts, LLCs, corporations) listed on the deed must sign.

Q: Is there a fee for initial SAD research and who pays it?

A: After a successful petition, the Township incurs costs to prepare for the Hearing of Necessity. These have been estimated and included in the project budget.

Q: When will homeowners receive final itemized cost breakdowns?

A: After a successful petition and completion of engineering work. Costs will be available before the Hearing of Necessity.

Q: What does “non-binding” mean on the SAD petition?

A: A signer may withdraw their name any time before the close of the Hearing of Necessity.

Q: Which properties are included in the SAD?

A: Current Sheldon Dunes well water system customers.

Q: Are all properties required to hook up to municipal water if the project moves forward?

A: Yes and No, if a successful SAD petition moves forward, current customers will be required to connect as dual water supply systems cannot be maintained, and many parcels cannot meet required isolation distances to accommodate private wells. The 2 parcels that are on private wells, and not in compliance with Sheldon dunes deed restrictions would be assessed and required to connect if/when their wells fail.

Q: Will vacant or grandfathered lots be required to hook up or be assessed?

A: They are initially included because they would receive benefit.

Q: Does ownership of the current well property revert to Sheldon Dunes?

A: According to the Developer/Township agreement and the recorded deed, it reverts to the developer or their heirs.

Q: Is this agreement recorded and reviewed?

A: Yes. It is recorded with the County Register of Deeds and reviewed by the township attorney.

Q: Are the engineering study recommendations requirements?

A: Yes. A pilot study and replacement of mains are required due to different water sources. GH Township requires ductile iron pipe.

Q: Are exceptions or variances possible?

A: Unlikely. EGLE guidance indicates risks and poor outcomes.

Q: Has an official survey been taken on homeowner preferences?

A: Not formally. SAD process will indicate direction

Q: What if most homeowners do not support the initial petition?

A: The Township will develop a capital improvement plan for the existing system, and weigh options as to what will provide the most reliable, safe, and cost efficient system going forward.

Q: Has there been a problem with the well system?

A: Yes. Multiple issues have been identified as equipment has aged.

Q: What is the problem now?

A: According to professional consultants, the generator has reached end of life and is unreliable. The tank air system has failed and requires supplemental portable air, main water lines are reaching end of design life, water quality, iron, and pressure issues are continually reported.

Q: Is there a cost breakdown for system replacement?

A: Yes. Included in the engineering report.

Q: Which components require immediate action?

A: Defined in the engineering report.

Q: What are expected budgets for the next 3-7 years?

A: A plan will be developed based on the selected direction.

Q: How does road work factor into SAD or water project costs?

A: If water mains are replaced, repaving is required, and costs have been calculated in the engineering estimates involved with connection to municipal water. If mains are maintained, road improvements occur separately when scheduled, and at additional cost.

Q: What are maintenance/operating costs under a do-nothing option?

A: A capital improvement plan is being developed, and draft version has been presented/posted.

Q: How will assessments or bills adjust for operating or capital costs?

A: Petition/SAD based projects are assessed during the winter tax bill; improvements to the existing system are reflected in annual/monthly water billing rates.

Q: Will maintenance investments improve reliability compared to municipal water?

A: Both options comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act, well water is untreated, and could be at future risk for contaminants

Q: Do Sheldon Dunes wells draw from a different aquifer than shallow private wells?

A: Yes. SD wells are 130–144 feet deep. Private wells should be at least 50 feet.

Q: Are water meters being considered?

A: Yes, potentially, but installation, maintenance, and billing would add cost.

Q: Does an opposing petition affect validity?

A: Petitions opposing an SAD have no legal effect; they are treated as correspondence.

Q: Can homeowners sign multiple petitions?

A: Yes. Only legally sufficient validated petitions with proper hearings can be binding related to the SAD process.

Q: Is a petition required for maintaining the existing system?

A: No. However, the Township may require one if major investment is proposed involving a SAD.

Cost evaluation comparison

Sheldon Dunes Water System

Summary of Options

Existing System	2025 Budget	% of Total System	Assessment (\$ / REU)	Connection fees	User Fees (\$/yr)
Phase 1 - 2027 Electric	\$ 331,250.00	7%	\$ 3,561.83	at phase 6	\$ 325.00
Phase 2 - 2030 Tanks	\$ 193,750.00	4%	\$ 2,083.33		recommend
Phase 3 - 2033 Well #2	\$ 250,000.00	5%	\$ 2,688.17		\$ 86.00
Subtotal Phases 1-3	\$ 775,000.00	16%	\$ 8,333.33		increase to
Phase 4 - ? Well #1	\$ 312,500.00	7%	\$ 3,360.22		build up fund
Phase 5 - ? Well #3, pipe	\$ 437,500.00	9%	\$ 4,704.30		balance
Phase 6 - ? Mains	\$ 3,207,500.00	68%	\$ 34,489.25	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 411.00
Grand Total	\$ 4,732,500.00	100%	\$ 50,887.10		
	\$4,081,250 in study	<i>Using 93 REUs</i>	\$ 43,884.41		
New System	2025 Budget	<i>Using 93 REUs</i>	Assessment (\$ / REU)	Connection fees	User Fees (\$/yr)
Phase 1 - GH Twp water	\$ 3,356,250.00		\$ 36,088.71	\$ 5,605.00	\$ 500.00
	\$3,920,000 in study		\$ 42,150.54		