

ROSS TOWNSHIP, KALAMAZOO COUNTY MICHIGAN

PRESS RELEASE: November 19, 2024

The Ross Township Board held a Town Hall on November 12, 2024. The event was well attended with interested citizens, residents and many individuals in attendance having Kalamazoo County Health Department-issued filtration systems (KCHD) installed in their homes due to residing in an area of concern for PFAS.

Initially, an expert panel made up of Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS), KCHD, City of Kalamazoo's James Baker, and Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART/EGLE) was assembled for presentations on PFAS in our Township and the grant award of \$20M, specific for Ross Township water extensions to deliver municipal water from the City of Kalamazoo to residents living with KCHD-issued PFAS filters and along the line of delivery. The grant award terms initially stated residents in the area of concern for PFAS would have free connections to municipal water within 5 years after the system being built. This was for new builds and for current residents. Connections were to be voluntary.

During the question & answer phase leading up to the Town Hall, the Township's legal counsel inquired as to the status of the grant should no citizens opt to connect to municipal water. This led to James Baker from City of Kalamazoo having to research this possibility with EGLE. During their conversation it became clear that EGLE's terms of the funding expected (at minimum) 50% of the total eligible residents in the area of concern to connect to municipal water, and, that the term of connecting expectations was in 3 years.

These new terms of the grant were dealbreakers for Ross Township. One year ago, the Ross Township Board voted to explore grant funding with the City of Kalamazoo, and we would only proceed if the funding was free for residents impacted by PFAS in our Township and the connection was voluntary. Due to the last minute demands EGLE placed on our neighbors, the Ross Township Board voted to rescind all discussions regarding municipal water with the City of Kalamazoo.

It is important to note that while conversations regarding EGLE's grant are no longer occurring, EGLE is still working on contaminant remediation of the 34th Street Production Plated Plastics property. Their efforts will focus on metal containment and PFAS studies. It is important for Ross Township residents to remain aware of updates of this site as we still have groundwater monitoring wells actively studied for PFAS in our Township. Residents are encouraged to follow this website: <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/investigations/sites-aoi/Kalamazoo-County/north-34th-street> for updates and to review new PFAS test results, PFAS maps and future meeting announcements from EGLE/MPART.

If residents have questions regarding PFAS, they are encouraged to reach out directly to the EGLE Site Lead Rachel Golota via email or cell, listed on this same website. If residents have questions regarding municipal water no longer being an option for some residents, they are encouraged to reach out to the Township for further information. Official Minutes from the Town Hall of November 12, 2024 will be posted on the Ross Township website, and a YouTube recording of the meeting can also be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK-SCED0TSk> .