

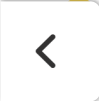


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Ti board hearing on Chilson water system continues



By **Tim Rowland**
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Mario Pedemonti speaks to the Ticonderoga Town Board about a planned water system for Chilson and Eagle Lake

TICONDEROGA | Town board members continued to field questions from Chilson and Eagle Lake residents Thursday (July 8) during an ongoing public hearing, as it attempts to provide water for 109 households whose current system will be shut down by the state in 2025.

The current system draws water from Gooseneck Pond, which has the twin problems of inadequate treatment and a failing dam.

The new system as proposed by the town would cost \$8.3 million, which everyone agrees is cost-prohibitive due to the small number of people who would be asked to pay for it. But the town hopes to knock the effective price in half by obtaining grants and reducing the annual bills further by stretching the repayment period out to 40 years instead of the more typical 30.

Without grant funding, the annual cost to water users would be \$2,600. With the grants, the cost would drop to \$1,665.

“We know traditional funding is not an option; if there is no grant money this is unaffordable,” said Supervisor Joe Giordano. “We have to work together to get this number down. This is a unique situation and we have to go after additional funds to make it viable.”

Three residents asked questions at the hearing, wanting assurance that they could pull the plug on the project if it turns out to be too expensive. “When do we say enough’s enough, we can’t afford it?” said Steve Meier. “Is there going to be enough time to inform everybody?”

The town has urged the communities of Chilson and Eagle Lake to write state and congressional representatives in hopes that a small group of citizens can make enough of a racket to draw sympathetic attention to their plight.

Through quirks of geography and history that no one fully remembers, the mountain communities were never part of the greater Ticonderoga water districts, and thus could not be legally included in the town's recent switch from Gooseneck Pond to new wells drilled on Street Road.

So now, Chilson and Eagle Lake are being asked to form their own water district, which would allow construction of a system that would pump water from the Street Road wells up Chilson Hill and replace degraded pipes that are nearly a century old and in some areas perilously close to the surface.

The town can create a district, but residents can reject it by petition. The town could also bypass the petition process by taking the project directly to the referendum, said Town Attorney Matt Fuller.

In other matters, the town:

- Agreed to apply for a waterfront improvement grant to improve the trail and create a pocket park along the upper reaches of the LaChute River. The section runs from the Trestle Bridge down to a more formalized trail that connects with the town.



un includes a plateau overlooking the Champlain Valley to the northwest. "It's beautiful and everybody knows it's there," said Board Member Joyce Cooper.



- Voted to combine its planning and zoning boards into one entity, due to a lack of enough volunteers to staff both boards.
- Set aside time for a public hearing at its August meeting to hear how town residents would like to see federal Covid-relief funds spent. The town expects to get in the neighborhood of \$500,000, and "sewer, water, and broadband are certainly eligible items," Giordano said. "It would be good to hear from the public" for ideas on its expenditure.



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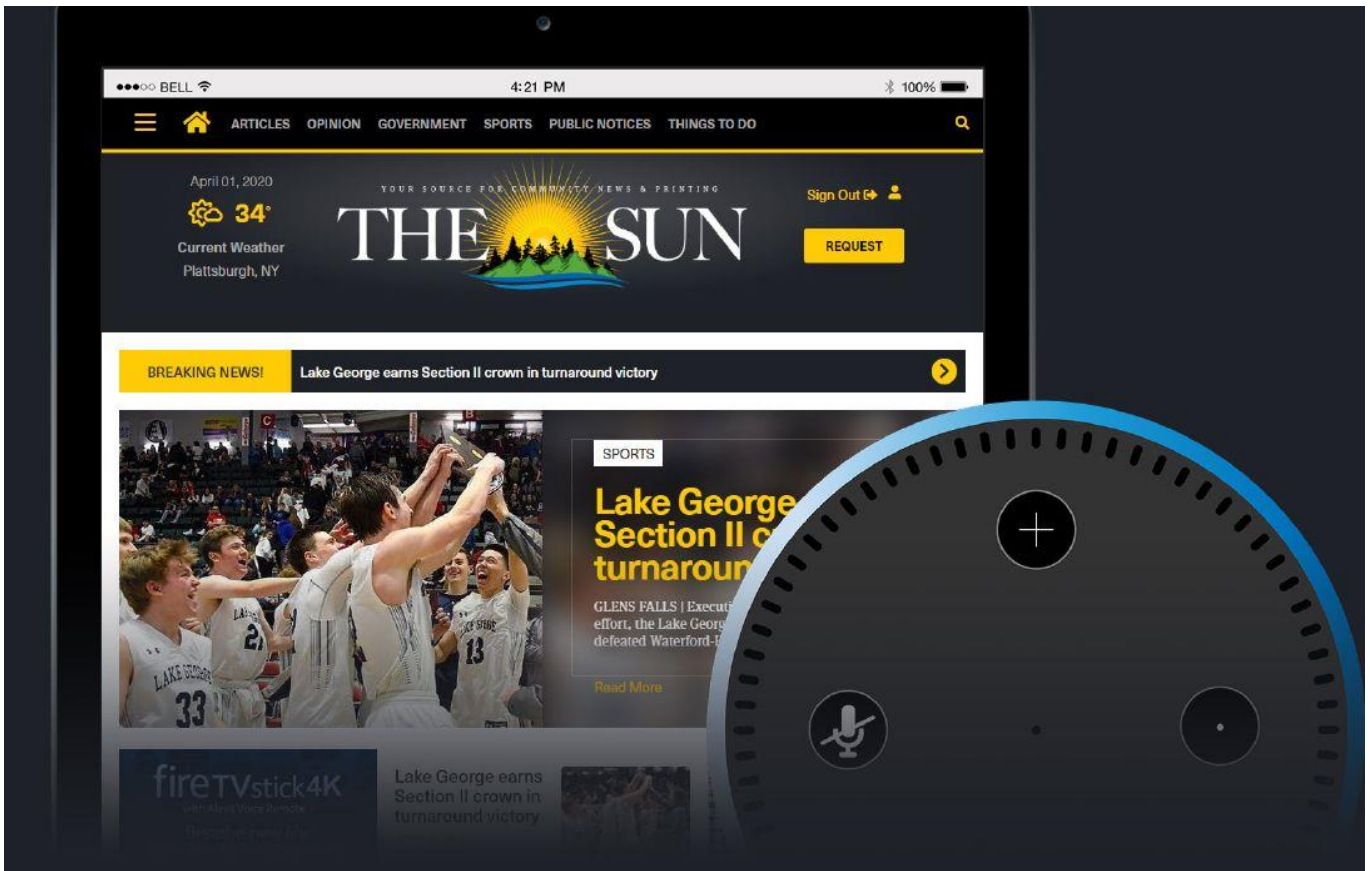
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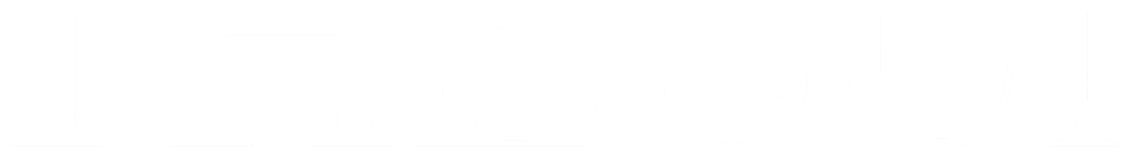
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