



City of Fort Atkinson  
City Manager's Office  
101 N. Main Street  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

**FORT ATKINSON CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY FLUORIDE LISTENING SESSION  
IN PERSON  
MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025 – 5:00 PM  
DWIGHT FOSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY – COMMUNITY ROOM**

If you have special needs or circumstances which may make communication or accessibility difficult at the meeting, please call (920) 397-9901. Accommodations will, to the fullest extent possible, be made available on request by a person with a disability.

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**AGENDA**

- 1. Call meeting to order**
- 2. Roll call**
- 3. New Business**
  - a. Presentation of information relating to fluoride in the City of Fort Atkinson Water System
- 4. Listening Session**
  - a. The Fort Atkinson City Council will receive public comments relating to the matter on the agenda. Speakers must be City residents, property owners, or business representatives in the City. Comments are generally limited to three minutes per individual. Anyone wishing to speak is required to sign up in advance and state their name and address for the record when called upon. The Council President may limit the total time allotted for public comments to 45 minutes.
- 5. Discussion**
  - a. The City Council will discuss the use of fluoride in the City's water system. After such discussion, staff requests that the City Council provide direction for future action item(s) on a regular City Council agenda.
- 6. Adjournment**

*Date Posted: July 10, 2025*

*CC: City Council; City Staff; City Attorney; News Media*

*Notice is hereby given that a majority of the Fort Atkinson City Council will be present at this meeting at the location and time indicated above to gather information about any subject matters on this agenda over which they have decision-making responsibility. This may constitute a meeting of the City Council pursuant to State ex rel. Badke v. Greendale Village Bd., 173 Wis.2d 553, 494 N.W.2d 408 (1993), and must be noticed as such although the City Council will not take any formal action at this meeting.*

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 14, 2025

**TO:** Fort Atkinson City Council

**FROM:** Rebecca Houseman, City Manager

**RE:** Presentation of information relating to fluoride in the City of Fort Atkinson Water System

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### BACKGROUND

Several City Council members have inquired about the City of Fort Atkinson's use of fluoride in the City's public water system. This listening session is intended to accomplish the following items:

1. Provide the City Council and the public with information relating to the City's use of fluoride in the water system.
2. Provide an opportunity to gather feedback from the public relating to the City's use of fluoride in the water system.
3. Provide the City Council with an opportunity to discuss the use of fluoride and provide staff with direction moving forward.

### DISCUSSION

The City of Fort Atkinson has used fluoride in the public water system since December 28, 1949. Attached to this staff report are several articles from the *Jefferson County Daily Union* from 1949 and 1950 relating to the decision to treat the water with fluoride.

The City initially added fluoride as a means to support oral health for children and has done so ever since. Both the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) recommend that operators of public water supplies add fluoride to water systems within the range of 0.6 to 0.8 milligrams per liter (mg/L) for optimal dental benefits. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for fluoride in drinking water of 4 mg/L. The City is required to monitor and control fluoride levels to ensure compliance with these regulations to protect public health.

In June, City staff tested the raw water from wells 6 and 7 to determine if there is a natural level of fluoride in the City's aquifer. Well 6 had a level of 0.09 mg/L, and Well 7 had a level of 0.05 mg/L. Neither of these meets the recommended levels by the DNR or DHS. The level the

City currently strives for is 0.7 mg/L.

The City reports all water testing results to the DNR on a monthly basis. These results are available through the DNR Drinking Water System Portal: [Drinking Water System Portal: Home Page](#). The City has been in compliance with the DNR relating to levels of fluoridation in the water system since record keeping began through this system in 1992. Staff monitors the levels of fluoride in the water system on a daily basis at each well site.

The City also publishes the annual water quality report on the City's website and linked here: [CCR Document](#).

### **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

There are costs associated with the fluoridation of the City's water system. The cost of the chemical on an annual basis is about \$8,900; and the cost associated with injection maintenance at the four wells is about \$2,600 annually. The labor costs are nominal, meaning that any reduction in chemical injection would not result in labor cost savings. The annual total is about \$11,500 for fluoridation. The 2025 Water Utility Fund (Fund 3) operating and capital budget is \$3,955,000. As a percentage of the overall budget, the cost of fluoridation is 0.3%. The cost per capita is roughly \$0.92 per year, assuming a population of 12,500 people.

The budget document is published on the City's website and linked here: [2025 Annual budget & 2025-2030 Capital Improvements Project Budget](#).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council provide feedback and direction to staff relating to the matters discussed during this meeting and included in this staff report.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Fluoride history DJCU 1948-1950
2. WI DHS Common Questions 1.2025

position of professional matches in this city.

nov. 1948

## Act to Prevent Decay in Teeth of Fort Children

### Unanimous Consent Given; Equipment to Cost About \$1,500

Fort Atkinson Tuesday night joined the growing list of cities that have put a stamp of approval on treating water supplies with fluorine as a tooth decay preventive.

Without any opposition, the local city council passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of needed equipment and materials. Councilman Robert Krueger made the motion on the resolution, Councilman Clyde Justus advanced a second, and it was carried unanimously.

The final approval action by the city officials Tuesday night climaxed a campaign for fluorination of the local water supply that had been led by many local dentists. Heading that campaign were Dr. S. H. Weidemann and Dr. O. J. Gates.

#### Installation Cost \$1,500

The two dentists were the only persons to witness the council's action on the measure Tuesday night. Both testified that it was the consensus of dentists that fluorine is a great factor in the preventing of tooth decay among children.

The installation of necessary equipment is expected to cost the city about \$1,500. The estimated upkeep will be about \$700 to \$1,000 a year.

The council took favorable action on the measure after a resolution, favoring the addition of fluorine, had been advanced from the city's PTA groups. A favoring resolution from the state dental society also was read.

The state board of health will approve and supervise all installation of necessary machinery. The treatment will include one part of fluorine to 1,000,000 parts of water.

#### Won't Even Notice It

It has been emphasized that residents of the city will not know when the fluorine is added to the water supply. The fluorine will give off no taste nor odor.

Dr. Gates reported that the city had "everything to gain and nothing to lose" by adding fluorine to the water, while City Manager Elmore Klement said that the measure offered "so much for so little."

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## Fluorinated Water Is Proven Oderless and Tasteless; You Have Been Drinking It for 15 Days Now in Fort

Jan. 11-1950

Fort Atkinson youngsters now have a better chance to live to a ripe old age with their own teeth still in their heads.

For, dating back to Dec. 28, 1949, this city's water supply has been treated with fluorine, a proven tooth decay preventive.

The fluorination program, authorized by the city council on Nov. 16, 1948, was installed without fanfare here in an effort to prove to the people that the fluorine gives off no taste or odor.

City officials feared that, if the starting date for the fluorination program had been announced in advance, some neurotic citizens would have "dreamed" a change of taste into their water supply and would have rained complaints down on the ears of those responsible for the installation of the water treatment project.

This way, fluorine has been pumped into each glass of drink-

ing water consumed in the city the past 15 days and not a single complaint has been received.

The necessary equipment for the fluorination program has been installed in the reservoir on N. Water st., W., at an estimated total cost of \$1,345. And it's anticipated that the program will cost about \$980 per year to maintain . . . or about 14 cents per capita, according to figures released by City Manager Elmore Klement.

The equipment includes a water softener, purchased from the Uherr Plumbing Co. here for \$110, and these supplies bought from the Klenzade Products, Inc., of Chicago — tank \$250, Chem-O-Feeder \$720, starter \$25 and test set \$22. A water meter used on the equipment cost \$18 and total installation costs were estimated at \$200.

The sodium fluoride is purchased in drums of about 400 pounds each and costs \$12.27 per

hundred pounds. As it takes about 20 pounds of sodium fluoride to treat 1,000,000 gallons of water, and as the city pumps about 400,000,000 gallons of water a year, the yearly cost of the fluoride compound will be about \$980.

The fluorine is fed into the city's water supply through the Chem-O-Feeder system at the rate of .8 to one part per million parts of water.

### Sherman Checks System

George Sherman, superintendent of waterworks, makes a daily check to see that the correct amount of fluorine is being measured out into the water. He also will check each month's water output against the amount of fluoride used.

Sherman also has checked water mains in all sections of the city to make certain that the sodium fluoride arrives in the correct ratio.

In its original form, sodium fluoride is a white, salt-like substance. It has no odor or taste.

The installation of the equipment climaxes a campaign for fluorination of the local water supply that had been led by many of the city's dentists. Heading that campaign were Dr. S. H. Weidemann and Dr. O. J. Gates.

At a council hearing on the measure, the two dentists testified that it was the consensus among the dentists that fluorine is a great factor in preventing tooth decay among children.

The city council took favorable action on the measure after a resolution, favoring the addition of fluorine, had been advanced from the city's PTA groups. A favoring resolution from the state dental society also was read.

### Teeth Will Be Checked

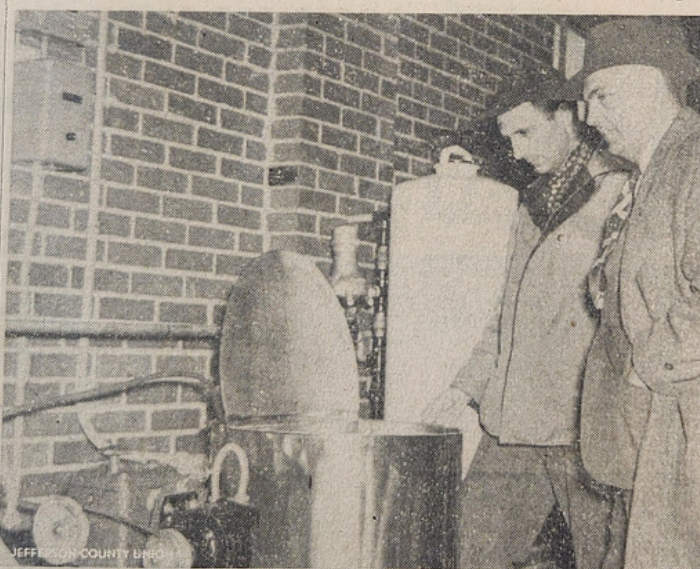
The state board of health approved and supervised the installation of the necessary machinery here.

A dental survey has been made among Fort Atkinson school children at the request of the state board of health and another will be made in three to five years to get the "before" and "after" effect.

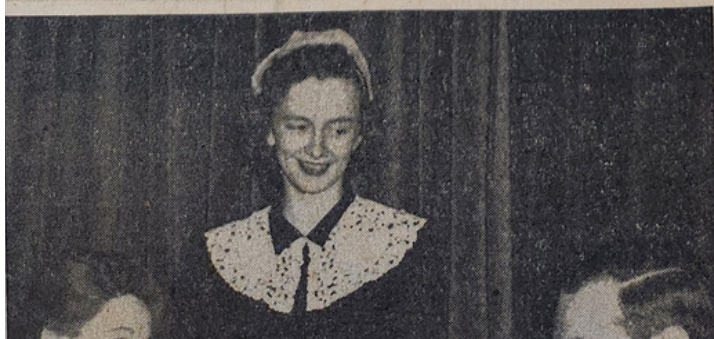
The effects of fluorine in drinking water have been noted for 40 years, the causes have been known for more than 15 years, and the ideas of artificial addition have been practiced in a limited way for about five years.

The rapid progress in public education is very fittingly expressed by a resolution of the fluorine study committee of the Wisconsin State Dental society on Aug. 12, 1948, stating that "all fluoride deficient public water supplies be regarded as unfair for young children to drink."

Fort Atkinson is one of several cities in the state that now fluorinate their drinking water.



Elmore Klement, city manager, and George Sherman, superintendent of waterworks, look over the equipment that has been feeding sodium fluoride into Fort Atkinson's drinking water for the last 15 days. The equipment was installed in the reservoir on N. Water st., W., at a total cost of about \$1,345 and the program will take about \$980 per year to maintain. Fluorination of the city's water supply was authorized by the city council on Nov. 16, 1948.—Daily Union Staff Photo.



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| <p><b>50 Cities in Wisconsin<br/>Will Fluorinate Water</b></p> <p>MADISON—(U.P.) — The State Dental society says it has accomplished its goal of introducing</p> <hr/> <p><b>MILWAUKEE<br/>AUDITORIUM</b></p> <p><b>JAN. 5th through 17th</b><br/>Eves. 8:15; Sat., Sun. Mats. 2:15</p> <p><i>All New; Faster; Funnier;<br/>More Spectacular</i></p>  | <p>fluoridation in the water systems of 50 Wisconsin cities.</p> <p>Twelve Wisconsin cities have fluorinated their water and 38 are installing equipment to do so. (Fort Atkinson is one of the latter).</p> <p>In fluorination, the fluorine element is put in the water. In fluoridation, the fluoride ion is put in the water. The fluoride is fluorine with a negative charge of electricity.</p> <p>The state dental society plans to publish an article next month showing how fluoridation helped stop children's teeth decay in four Wisconsin communities.</p> <p>Agricultural hall at the University of Wisconsin was completed in 1903.</p> |
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# Daily Jefferson County Union, May 23, 1950

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1950

## Daily Jefferson County Union

FOUNDED IN 1870 BY W. D. HOARD  
FORT ATKINSON, WISCONSIN

**AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN NEWSPAPER**  
**W. D. HOARD & SONS, Publishers**  
**RAY HANSEN, Editor**

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Entered as second class matter at the postoffice at Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, under the act of March 3, 1879.

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday.

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Member of United Press, Inland Daily Press Association, Wisconsin Daily Newspaper Association, American Newspaper Publishers Association and United Features, NEA, Acme Pictures and Midwest Features.

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**THOUGHT FOR TODAY**  
*The precept, "Know yourself," was not solely intended to obviate the pride of mankind; but likewise that we might understand our own worth.—Cicero.*

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### FORT'S FUTURE BITES TO BE HEALTHIER . . .

Fort Atkinson is basking in new rays of praise about the shining future of Wisconsin children as far as teeth are concerned. The state is now leading the nation in trying to prevent cavities in children's teeth. It's all being done by fluorine which 23 cities in Wisconsin are adding to their water supplies. And Fort Atkinson is one of those 23.

The remarkable thing about the fluorine is that you cannot taste, smell, see or in any other way detect it in the water. That was proven in Fort Atkinson, when not a single complaint was heard when the chemical was first added to the water here. The amount placed in the water is so small that only laboratories can determine whether it is present. There is only one part of fluoride to every million parts of water.

Samples of the treated water are examined periodically at the state laboratory of hygiene at the University of Wisconsin, to make certain that the proper amount of fluorine is placed in the water to keep tooth decay at a minimum.

Only children, whose tooth enamel is still forming, will benefit from the fluoride, according to dental experts. Those of us who already have our permanent teeth (natural, not falsies) cannot remedy the already formed tooth structure. Yet the fluoridation is of value to adults, for expectant mothers need the fluoride so that their developing children will have cavity resistant teeth.

Sodium fluoride is the compound that chemists have selected as the best among several possible chemicals to add to public water supplies. It is also readily available at relatively low cost, and is comparatively easy to add to the water. The treatment costs the average Wisconsin citizen whose water is fluoridated only 14 cents a year. Even those who are not benefited individually by the process can hardly complain about the expense, when the general good to the community is realized.

We can all take pride in the fact that Fort Atkinson is among the first to take this progressive step to prevent tooth decay for our future generations, and is helping to place Wisconsin out in front in this respect.

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# Answers to Your Common Questions About Fluoride



Water operators perform a valuable public service by adjusting the level of fluoride in water to prevent cavities in their community.

1

## Why do communities fluoridate their water and what are its benefits?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that prevents cavities. For the last 80 years, communities have been adjusting fluoride in drinking water to make sure everyone has access to this proven method to protect teeth. The optimal amount is 0.7 milligrams per liter (mg/L) — equivalent to a few drops in 55 gallons of water. Community water fluoridation keeps people from losing their teeth, reducing the need for dentures. People are also less likely to go the emergency room for dental pain and spend less money on dental treatments when they have access to fluoride in their drinking water. Children receive the additional benefit of fluoride strengthening their teeth as they form.

## Is fluoridated water at 0.7 mg/L safe?

Yes, water fluoridation at 0.7 mg/L is safe and the practice of fluoridating water has been widely studied. The U.S. recommends a fluoride level of 0.7 mg/L. In some areas of the world, natural levels of fluoride are much higher. At higher levels, fluoride may cause negative health impacts. But studies researching lower fluoride levels like those found in the U.S. show no such effects. The research is complex, but the level recommended in the U.S. is safe and effective.

2



3

## Is it safe for water operators to add fluoride to water?

Water operators must follow safety precautions when handling water additives. Using the proper personal protective equipment means water operators will not have unnecessary exposure to fluoride additives. If a community has questions, contact the appropriate Department of Natural Resources representative for the most up-to-date information about equipment needs and safe storing and handling procedures.

## Do fluoride additives impact equipment?

When fluoride is stored properly and equipment maintained, the equipment will have a long, useful life. Corrosion and etching can occur when the additive is improperly ventilated or stored. Properly handling fluoride before adding it to the water supply will prevent this. Water operators should follow all ventilation procedures, and check seals regularly, correcting leaks as they occur.

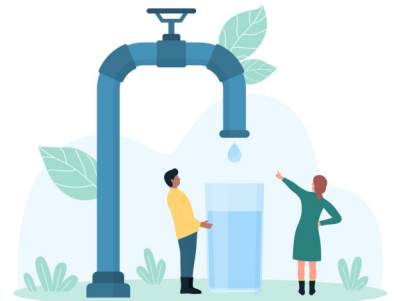
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## What's the status of water fluoridation in Wisconsin?

In Wisconsin, about 85% of people served by a public water system have fluoridated water. Many communities continue to adjust the fluoride content of their water as part of an equation (alongside access to dental care and individual behavior like flossing and brushing teeth) that contributes to good health.

There is a lot of information making news and being sent to water operators on the topic of fluoride in community water and leaders are working to make the best decisions for their communities. Because fluoride is naturally occurring in drinking water, communities need to control fluoride levels in water, and these recommendations ensure that fluoride levels will remain safe and maximize health benefits.



Visit the [Wisconsin Oral Health Program's Fluoride and Community Water Fluoridation webpage](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health/fluoride-community-water-fluoridation.htm) for more information!

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health/fluoride-community-water-fluoridation.htm>



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH SERVICES**

**Division of Public Health  
Oral Health Program**

**P-03691  
(01/2025)**