

Lake Forest Water Coop Information & FAQ

The Lake Forest Water Cooperative Association provides water for the Lake Forest neighborhood. The Coop was incorporated on October 8, 1943 as a non-stock association of property owners in the neighborhood. We, the members, own the wells, pumps, and water mains, and are responsible for providing our own water. The lines between the water mains and the homes/apartments/businesses are the responsibility of the individual property owners.

Does the Town of Madison provide our water?

No, our water is not provided by the Town of Madison or other government entity, though the Town donated one of our pumps. The Town does provide sewer service which they bill through the annual property tax.

What is our service area?

We provide water for the Lake Forest neighborhood: the homes, apartments/condos, and businesses located between Carver and Martin Streets as well as the Town of Madison town hall and the apartment/condo complexes located on the south side of Martin Street.

Who makes decisions regarding the operations of our water system?

The membership elects officers and a Board of Directors. They serve as volunteers and currently are:

Gary Davis	President	2018 Dickson Place
Henry Bassett	Vice President	2030 Irwin Place
Mary Hetrick	Secretary	2021 Frazer Place
Beth Stenner	Treasurer	1505 Carver Street
Bill Elkington	Director	1606 Martin Street
Mark Haines	Director	2025 Dickson Place
Sara Fauver	Director	2010 Irwin Place
Gaylord Plummer	Director	1609 Carver Street
Gregg Riemer	Director	2038 Catlin Place
Brent Valentine	Director	2037 Dunn Place

Where does our water come from?

Our water comes from our two wells near the west end of Carver and Martin Streets. Well number 1 is 147 feet deep and well number 2 is 253 feet deep.

Is our water chlorinated or fluoridated?

No, our water is not treated with chlorine, fluoride, or any other substance or additive.

Is our water safe?

Yes. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates us as a “Public Water System – Other than Municipal (OTM)”. We’re required to have a certified operator, Ron Slane, and to test our water under the same standards as a municipal system. Water is tested both at the well heads and at a few distribution points (faucets). We file an annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) summarizing our water quality. This is available on the Town of Madison’s Public Works website: <https://townofmadison.wordpress.com/public-works/>. The detailed results of the tests and other info are on the DNR’s website: <https://dnr.wi.gov/dwsviewer/DS/Search>. Our PWS (Public Water System) number is 11302324.

If you’re concerned about contaminants entering the system between the Coop’s lines and your faucets, you can pay to have your water tested by the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (<http://www.slh.wisc.edu/environmental/water/wi-water-well-info/>) or other lab (<https://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/labcert/lablists.html>).

Do we have lead pipes?

Our water is distributed through iron and copper pipes. However a few houses built in the 1920s may have a lead pipe leading in from the Coop’s mains.

Why don’t we have water when the power goes out?

We don’t have a water tower, so when the power goes out, the pumps don’t operate and there is no water pressure until power is restored. However, we are considering remedying this problem by installing a backup generator.

Other than the DNR, are we regulated by any other government entities?

As a cooperative, we fall under Chapter 185 of the Wisconsin statutory code: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/185> and are required to file an annual report with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.

What are our water rates?

Unlike most municipal water utilities, we don't have water meters (except for the BP station), so we charge a flat rate per unit per year. Our current rates are as follows:

Type of Property	# of units	Rate/unit/year
Houses/Duplexes	119	\$120
Apartments/condos	108	\$75
Businesses	4	\$120
BP Gas Station and Car Wash	1	Metered and billed at the City rate
Town of Madison Town Hall	1	\$0

In contrast the average residence in the City of Madison pays \$318/year for water as of 2019.

What are our annual expenses?

Our expenses fluctuate depending the costs of maintenance and repairs. Fortunately, we haven't had any significant water main breaks since 2011. In that year we had two breaks under Martin Street which cost about \$25,000 to repair. Electricity to power our pumps costs around \$4,000/year and water tests are around \$1500/year. With maintenance and other costs our expenses average \$8,000 to \$10,000 a year.

What does the future hold?

As you know, the City of Madison will be annexing our neighborhood in October, 2022. Although the City has its own water utility there will be no requirement that our members connect to City water, and the Coop can continue to exist and supply our water. The City may begin to reconstruct the public infrastructure, probably not before 2025 at the earliest, but the Coop can remain independent.

After annexation each property owner will receive a monthly utility bill from the City. It will not include water, but will include sewer. Since our water use is not metered, the City will charge a flat sewer rate which in 2019 was \$28.54 a month per unit. Under the Town the sewer charge has been added to property tax bills.

Financially, the Coop can continue to supply water into the near future at a cost considerably lower than that of the City. Our wells and lines are in good shape. We may need to replace our pumps in a year or two at a cost of \$10,000-20,000. We have accumulated a financial reserve sufficient to cover that expense and as well as routine

maintenance and repairs. If we were to have a large scale systemic failure of our lines, an assessment of the membership might be necessary.