

# Windermere Water YES Vote

**SAFE WATER**

YES

NO

April 17, 2018

Drinking Water Workshop



# Overview

- How the RDEK built trust, engaged the community to solve drinking water challenges through a successful Referendum
  1. Windermere's Story – Part 1 & 2
  2. Obstacles
  3. Best Practices



# Windermere's Story

- Who is Windermere?
  - RDEK owned water system since 80s
  - 550+ connections
  - Water Source: Lake Windermere
  - Water Quality Advisory since 2006
    - Turbidity
    - Risk of Bacteria, Viruses, Parasites



# Windermere's Story

- Interior Health, RDEK and Community members want:
  - Provision of safe, treated water
  - Take down the Water Quality Advisory Signs



# Windermere's Story – Part 1

RDEK's Solution – low cost



# 2009...2010

## RDEK Steps

- Find cheapest option to achieve goal (safe water)
- Engage consultant
  - Bulk water purchase from Private (\$5M - cheaper)
  - Build new water treatment plant (\$12M)
- Apply for funding
  - BCF: \$1.5M – for bulk water purchase
  - Community Works: \$0.4M



# 2010...2011

- RDEK held information sharing sessions
  - 2010 - Round table discussions
  - 2011 - Short presentation
    - Explain Water Quality Advisory
    - Present 2 options, with costs & funding
    - IHA & Provincial Water Comptroller representatives on site
- Messages from community participants:
  - Water is fine
  - Concern about private utility
  - Too expensive



# June 2011

- Community members rally behind “Alternative Option” (repurpose Fire Hall) just before vote
- High Turbidity caused Boil Water Notice days before vote
- Vote:
  - Yes 41 (17%)
  - **NO 203 (83%)**





# Windermere's Story – Part 2

Engagement: a slow and steady progress



# RDEK Regroups

**Hey Windermere,  
We're listening!**

We heard you loud and clear after the Windermere  
Water Upgrade vote last year and  
we need your help with a new start.

- Community Involvement
  - Met re “Alternative Option”
  - Created Committee of Citizens
  - Community Survey - - - - ->
    - Priorities, ownership, safe water ideas, communication preferences
  - Community conversations & Round Table (2012)
    - with Independent Facilitator



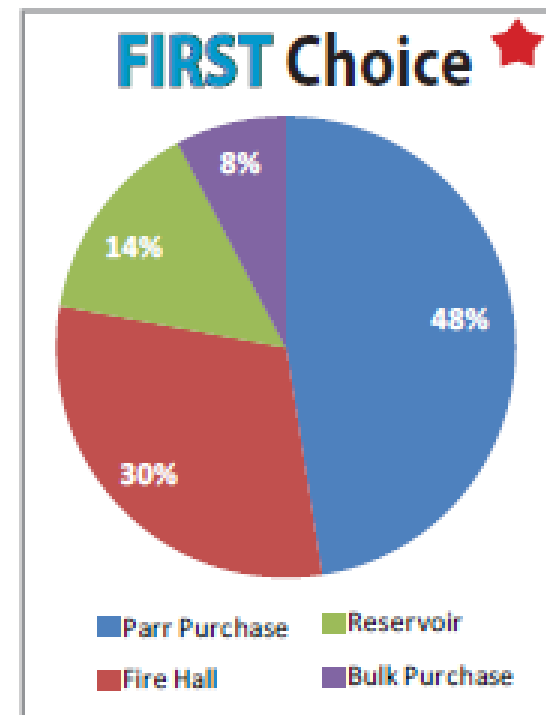
# The Community's Priorities

- ✓ Provision of safe drinking water
- ✓ At the lowest fees and taxes and
- ✓ Preference for Public Ownership!



# Detailed Engineering Review

- Consultant engaged to review ALL options
  - Community member involvement in early stages
  - Feasibility & costs
  - 9 options to 4 feasible
- December 2013 - 4 options
  - Community presentation & Electronic Survey - - - - >
  - Reservoir Plant - \$1,700/yr
  - Fire Hall Plant - \$1,540/yr
  - ❖ Purchase Plant - \$1,435-1,530/yr
  - Buy Bulk - \$1,410/yr



# 2014...2016: 2 Options remain

- Bulk water option Connection Fees increased which eliminated the option
- Board decision eliminated 1 option (repurposing Old Fire Hall not favourable)
- August 2016: Open House on 2 remaining options
  - Clear message to move ahead with Purchase Private Plant, including building



# 2017

- RDEK completed financial due diligence, final negotiations and signed purchase agreement conditional on community assent
- Vote:
  - **YES 117 (77%)**
  - No 34 (23%)



# Obstacles

Hindsight is 20/20



# Obstacles

- Community overcoming mistrust with Government
  - Water is Safe, drinking it for years
  - Grant funding timing = “Done Deal”
  - Boil Water Notice days before vote
- Sizing of a new Water Treatment Plant
  - Part of basis for community’s “Alternate Option”
  - Current population vs full buildout = too \$\$\$





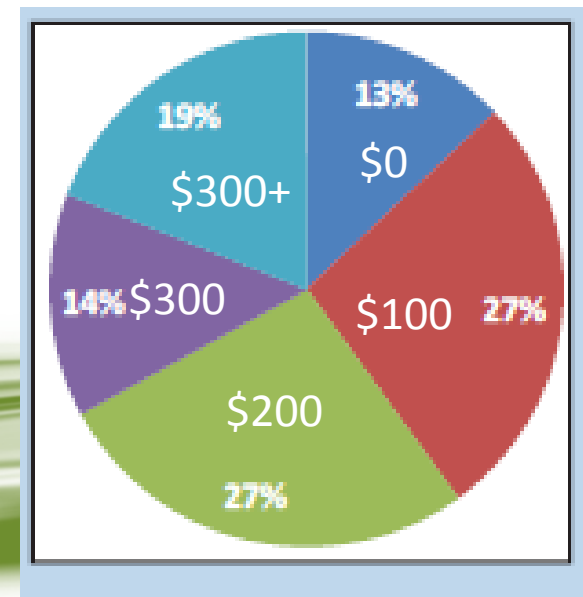
# Obstacles

- Community Concerns:
  - Public vs Private
  - Costs
- Other Distractions
  - Vote vs Petition
  - Taxation (frontage vs parcel)

## Community Priorities



## How much more \$ for public?



# Best Practices

What we've learned



# Best Practices

- Engagement/Communication/Information
  - Community cohesiveness
  - Community Champions – for or against proposal?
  - Community trust
- Consider Optics of our decisions
  - ALL STAKEHOLDERS determine best option
  - Validate Assumptions
  - Consider ALL options – think outside the box
- Time





# Questions?

Brian Funke, RDEK Engineering Services Manager

