

Macoun Water Turbidity Issue Update

April 7, 2025

Village Council and personnel along with Saskatchewan Water Security and other organizations have continued talks since the water turbidity issue was discovered in the Village water treatment plant on November 1, 2024. Initial findings pointed towards the in-ground cistern as being the cause of the high turbidity. Council requested and received quotes for cistern liners as well as spray concrete repairs to the cistern ranging from \$30,000 - \$125,000. Council did not rush into a decision on liners or spray concrete saving ratepayers' unnecessary costs as through continued testing and monitoring, it was discovered the turbidity issue was forming before the water entered the cistern, ruling out the cistern as the cause of the high turbidity.

Further testing results now show organics in the Village raw water supply that appear to be reacting to the sodium hypochlorite that is used to treat the water after filtering is complete. After a lengthy discussion with Saskatchewan Water Security agents, a plan was presented and approved by Council to change out the rock, sand and carbon in the two carbon filter tanks. The product has been ordered and once received, the material will be replaced and monitoring will again focus on turbidity numbers. Once the turbidity testing numbers drop below the allowable provincial limit, six water samples will be submitted to the provincial lab for testing. If all tests come back good, Saskatchewan Water Security will review to see if the PDWA can be lifted for the community. The approved changes to the carbon filters may not be the final fix required for the turbidity levels to lower or remain under the allowable limit. Further monitoring, testing and discussions will determine if further work will be required at a later date.

Council and staff understand the frustration of the residents with the inconvenience this PDWA has caused, however Council does not want to make any rushed decisions costing ratepayers for unnecessary repairs or changes to the water treatment plant. Municipalities are not required to provide residents with drinking water, however Macoun has been lucky enough that safe drinking water has been offered since the new water treatment plant was built in 2007. Due to the added expenses with testing, monitoring and potential changes to the water treatment plant due to this PDWA, Council will not be issuing a credit on the Village water rates of \$33.10 per month. Village water and sewer rates have not been increased in 7 years in the community and when they last increased in 2018, Macoun was sitting at below 50% of the provincial average for water rates in communities of similar size.

If you have any questions pertaining to the PDWA, please do not hesitate to contact the Village office at 306-634-9352 or Saskatchewan Water Security Agent Rod Broughton at 306-551-9412.