

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council

FROM: Bill Bruce

DATE: January 26, 2024

RE: USGS Monitoring Well

The Town of Oak Ridge has participated in a Joint Funding Agreement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) (attached) for a groundwater monitoring well behind Town Hall since 2008. The Town contributes 100% of the cost of the well monitoring, which historically amounted to \$5000/year, but has now risen to \$6600/year.

The data collected by the USGS is combined with data from other wells in the region and the state to create an historical record of groundwater levels. The data is available on the USGS website, but in its raw form has little practical value for staff, and presumably for the citizens of Oak Ridge, who to my knowledge have never requested access to the data that for many years was included on our website. Furthermore, most wells in Oak Ridge are hundreds of feet deep in the fractured rock, so slight variations in groundwater level (roughly 20 feet below the surface) are difficult to interpret in any meaningful way.

The funding agreement follows the federal fiscal year (Oct.1-Sept. 30) so it overlaps two Town fiscal years. If approved the Town would be invoiced in July 2024, and funding would be included in the draft FY24/25 Town budget. The invoice for this fiscal year was paid in July 2023.

Requested Action: Advise whether the Town Council wishes to continue participation in this program at the current cost of \$6600/year.

