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HEALTH

# Auburn buying tech to reduce disinfection byproducts in water

Kelly Rocheleau Aug 7, 2023 Updated 12 hrs ago 0



The city of Auburn's water treatment plant. The Citizen file



Kelly Rocheleau

After the level of disinfection byproducts at a testing site in Auburn's water system **recently exceeded** a federal standard, the city has approved the purchase of technology that will address the issue.

At a meeting Thursday, Auburn City Council passed a resolution accepting a \$95,445 bid for a chlorine dioxide generator, which could lower the level of potentially dangerous disinfection byproducts in the water. The purchase is the result of a review by the city's Department of Municipal Utilities, which uses sodium hypochlorite for disinfection and zebra mussel control.

Councilor Jimmy Giannettino praised Seth Jensen, the city's municipal utilities director, and his staff for ensuring city residents have safe water.

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"I want people to know that, locally, we are doing everything we can to continue to make sure they continue to have clean drinking water," Giannettino said.

The annual average of trihalomethanes in the water at a city sampling location at 33 York St., owned by Nucor Steel, was determined to be 81 parts per billion, over the 80 parts-per-billion standard from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in December. A **public notice** said it was "not an emergency" and the city's water operators would start flushing hydrants to lessen the system's level of trihalomethanes, which have been linked to cancer, birth defects and other health problems.

Using chlorine dioxide instead of sodium hypochlorite to disinfect has been successful in lowering disinfection byproducts for other regional water purveyors, the resolution said. City staff held several meetings with Department of Health staff, engineering firms specializing in water treatment and neighboring communities that use chlorine dioxide for disinfection and zebra mussel control.

Auburn opened bids in June for the supply, installation, support and long-term maintenance of the chlorine dioxide generator, with the only bid coming from International Dioxide, Inc. of Rhode Island. The award includes the generator, the initial supply of required chemicals, installation and training, three years of annual maintenance and service.

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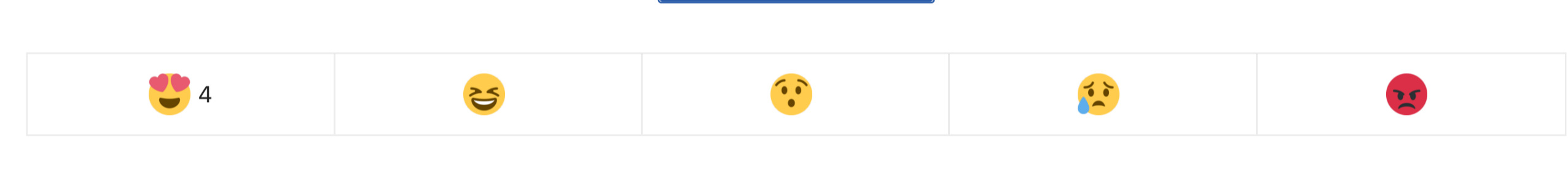
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