BATES TOWNSHIP—Residents in three areas of Bates Township attended the Board of Trustees' April 11 meeting to learn more about proposed water line abandonments.

Township Supervisor Grant Helgemo assured the residents the township does not intend to shut off anyone's water at the present time, but invited them to the meeting to discuss options.

"We aren't the only township dealing with potential line abandonments," he said.

"Both Stambaugh and Iron River townships are having the same problems."

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As an example of the seriousness of the problem, Helgemo explained there have been 26 leaks in the water lines on Bates-Amasa Road in the past six years.

Seven occurred last year alone, he said.

Adding to the problem—the water lines cross the road about four times.

Many of the older water lines in the township, put in by the mining companies more than 50 years ago, are two-inch lines.

The township can't replace them with six-inch lines, which is now code, said Helgemo.

`"It's not economically feasible for the township."

Rural Development grants and loans would not help, either, as projects funded through the agency must serve a larger population and would most likely involve a dramatic rate increase.

The three areas slated for eventual line abandonment are on Passamani Road., Bates-Amasa Road and Sunset Lake Road. About a dozen properties are affected.

The board offered several options for the residents to consider.

One, said Helgemo, would involve tying into new lines in the vicinity.

This solution could work with the lines on Passamani Road.

Another is for residents to have individual wells drilled, or look into a community well to service several homes.

Regardless of what options taken, the township will give residents two years' notice, and free water from the point notice is given, Helgemo said.

"We're not shutting you off now or in the near future," he said.

The board discussed the availability of low-interest/low-income loans.

A representative from Kleiman Pump and Well Drilling of Iron Mountain attended the meeting to help explain some programs.

He said the problem was not unique to Iron County.

in other business:

--Rich Freghetto, president of the Chicaugon Lake Homeowners Association, made a presentation to the board concerning implementation of a permit program on the lake.

Four townships have property on the lake, he said, including Bates, Stambaugh, Crystal Falls and Mastodon.

Permits will be sold for all watercraft on and entering the lake, with stickers available at various rates, beginning on May 15. The permit fees will be used to pay for treatment for invasive species affecting the lake.

--The township received 12 bids for its pickup. Kevin Caroen's bid for $1,156.50 was accepted.

A bid from Oberlin's Kitchen and Bath was accepted for hall flooring, including the office, back

hall and front entrance and kitchen.

--The board approved the purchase of a Gravely mower from U.S. 2 Rental for $4,900, plus $168 for a mulcher attachment.

--A $40 sponsorship of West Iron County High School's Project Graduation was approved.

--Salary increases for the township assessor and zoning administrator were approved.