IRON RIVER TOWNSHIP—After the start date was pushed back again, Iron River Township's water line replacement project is expected to start the week of Aug. 20.

GEI Consultants' Jeff Bal updated board members at the Aug. 14 township meeting, explaining that Hebert Construction is ready to go, but it is waiting for directional boring to be completed by the sub contractor.

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Another issue that came up was the installation of fiber optic line along U.S. 2 by Merrit Communications.

Township attorney Steve Polich told the board that despite denying Merrit's request to lay the fiber optic line, on the basis that it would interfere with the water project and create additional cost, the company had planned to install the line anyway.

Polich told the board that Township Utilities Supervisor Ron Froblom had run into workers just west of Gibbs City Road and that they did indeed plan to put in line without a permit.

The line is scheduled to run from Crystal Falls to Wakefield, with the area between the city of Iron River and Brandon Hill, in the township, set for next week.

This fiber optic line poses more crossings for the contractor, which was estimated at $500 per crossing, approximately $50,000 in additional costs for the township.

After several phone calls, Polich said he is under the impression that Merrit's plans are on hold and it will not be proceeding within the project area until the issue is worked out.

Bal also discussed the sewer lift station and control panel proposal, which had been requested by the board in recent months.

The goal is to modernize the system, while making the stations compatible.

Bal summarized GEI's plan, including recommendations for the Dobson lift station, which needs the most urgent repairs, with its corroded slide rails and make shift dialer.

Costs to repair the station, including engineering, were estimated at $59,000.

This estimate also covered the expense of updating the dialer, which places phone calls when lift station motor and level issues arise, what Bal called a "crude 1970's system."

He recommended a more reliable computerized supervisory control and data acquisition system, which assists in controlling the sewer infrastructure processes.

The SCADA system is not new technology, but is something the township has decided against installing in previous years.

Bal recommended taking action on the Dobson lift station before winter.

The remaining sewer lift stations at Old Beechwood Road, Gibbs City Road and U.S. 2 are in need of repair as well, with outdated and difficult to purchase components.

The total cost estimate to repair all sewer lift stations and install the SCADA system on both the water and sewer systems was $252,000.

Bal further explained the benefits of the SCADA system, which records all tank levels and run times and radios the information to a centralized location for observation.

The system would save employees from numerous trips to each tank house or lift station. With the system, the township could also reduce the current required six phone lines to one line.

Bal was directed to look into loans for such work and Township Clerk Amber Laturi noted the

possibility of utilizing the township's sewer deficit reserve money.

The board discussed the possibility of raising the road millage request from one mill to two mills for the November ballot.

This would generate $100,000, rather than $50,000, enabling them to do more road projects. It was suggested that the voters have the option of either one mill or two mills.

Laturi stated that she would look into it. If the two proposals are not able to be on the ballot, the millage request decision will be made at the Aug. 21 special meeting, scheduled to discuss how to spend the current road millage money.

The long-awaited township master plan was accepted by the board, and a public hearing was scheduled for 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 11, immediately preceding the regular township meeting.

Copies of the master plan will be available for the public to review before the public hearing.

The board approved spending up to $2,200 to test a piece of copper water pipe that went bad after a short time in the ground, noting that the majority of the U.S. 2 portion of the water project calls for copper pipe to be installed under the highway.

Supervisor Mark Polley recommended the testing to make sure there is no possibility that the pipe went bad due to environmental factors, which they may run into again down the road.