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Tazewell looks to extend reach

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TAZEWELL, Va. — The town of Tazewell is growing by another 500 citizens.

A “friendly boundary adjustment” requested by the town of Tazewell has been approved by the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors. The plan brings Tazewell Middle School, Tazewell Community Hospital, the new Four Seasons Wellness Center and about 150 residential structures into the town limits.

“The majority of them are already on town water and sewer, and they pay a 50 percent surcharge for water and sewer because they are out of town,” Tazewell Town Manager Jerry Wood said. “As soon as this is officially approved, and it’s already been voted on by both boards but we still have to petition the circuit court and that will be the final approval, but when we get the final approval their water bills will go down. We still start patching and paving the streets, and street lights will immediately go up. That is just the beginning. With police protection — we’ve already started hiring additional police officers. The school will now have a resource officer supplied by the town, and fire protection will begin immediately.”

Wood said Tazewell Middle School is not currently located in the town limits of Tazewell. The boundary adjustment will bring the school into the municipal limits. The town has been working on the boundary adjustment plan for about a year.

“When you do a friendly boundary adjustment, it is a good process,” Wood said. “But it’s not a quick process because a lot of other things need to be done.”

Mike Hymes, the Southern District Board of Supervisors member, said the overall response to the proposed boundary adjustment has been positive.

“Earlier this year we were approached by the town of Tazewell regarding a boundary adjustment for the town,” Hymes said. “As a part of my responsibility I sent a letter to all the citizens effected and solicited their input regarding the adjustment. The overall response was positive from those receiving letters. There were a few with issues but the town manager, county attorney and I were able to work though most of the issues including the valuing of transfer of the exiting PSA water lines to the town. I think we are ready to allow this boundary adjustment to proceed. The adjustment will bring reduced water rates, additional police and fire protection, road maintenance and other services to those citizens effected. This also allows a local business to get much needed sewer to allow them to expand. I am very glad we can do this in a friendly manner without a great deal of the political disagreement we have seen in other boundary adjustments.”

Wood said he didn't know when the circuit court would issue a final ruling on the boundary adjustment plan. Wood said the town hopes to make the boundary adjustment official by the end of the year.

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