

Lyerly Debating Taking Fluoride Out Of Water

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By JASON ESPY Staff Writer The Mayor of Lyerly calls it rat poison, but you are drinking it. The container this stuff comes in has labels with skulls and crossbones with bold letters that say "Toxic." But yet you are drinking it. The substance in question or debate is the fluoride injected into municipal water systems across the nation. "We have pulled it up on the internet and there are as many pros and there are cons. It's just whatever you decide truly," Lyerly Councilwoman Juanita Baker said during Tuesday's council meeting. Fluoride is said to prevent tooth decay. But Mayor Charles Jones called its side effects, "rat poison." "I'm reading a book. I don't know if anybody else is reading it," Councilwoman Baker said. She and others have obtained a book called "Fluoride Deception." It talks about the supposed evils of fluoride. For example, on a package of fluoride from one of the local water systems obtained by The News, there are numerous health warnings. "Harmful if swallowed or inhaled. May burn skin and eyes. Do not get in eyes, on skin or clothing. Skin contact may cause the formation of large open sores especially in the presence of moisture. . . ." While the bulk fluoride package contains those warnings, so does chlorine which is also injected into the water system. These compounds and minerals in the raw may kill, but diluted officials have found some benefit. "But if the state requires it in your water, then you have to put it in there," one Lyerly officials aid. "I kind of look at it like this: When I was a kid, I would look around and people were dying at 60 and 65 years old. I thought then, man if I can make it that long I will be happy. Here I am done passed that and they've had fluoride and chlorine in the water and everybody now are living to 80 or 85," Lyerly General Superintendent Harold Ragland said. EPD The town could not yank fluoride out of its system arbitrarily. It would require the approval of the EPD and others. "I talked with two or three different people and the EPD when this came up . . . It would have to be voted on (by the citizens) for us to take it out. That is the way I understand it from the people at the EPD," Ragland said. In other action before the city council, they didn't know the City of Summerville was hiking their water rates 7.5 percent. The council did not know whether they would pass that increase along to Lyerly water customers. The council said this was the second time in a year that Summerville officials decided to spring a water hike on them. "That means it will be twice they raised the rates in a year's time," Councilwoman Baker said. "Last time I checked the water bill that we got from them, it was still the same rate. Of course we've got a contract that goes year to year and that is not up," Ragland said. The contract ends soon though and by Oct. 31 the new fees will go into effect, according to Summerville officials.