



THE

LAWRENCE LIFT



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 54

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2020

DEAR LAWRENCE UTILITY CUSTOMER,

UTILITY DISCONNECTION UPDATE

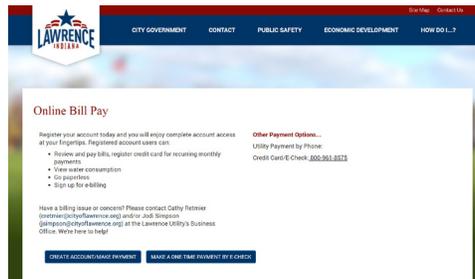
As you know, the utility has put a hold on non-payment disconnections in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders. This ban on disconnections ends on August 14th.

Lawrence Utilities will resume non-payment disconnections on September 2nd (for charges due on the August 10th bill).

We continue to strongly encourage our customers to make their payments, or pay as much as they can, in order to avoid having large amounts in arrears.

We know it has been difficult for some in our community, and in order to help

ease the burden, we are offering modified extended payment plans of up to 6-months. While you are on an extended payment plan, and as long as you



are making the agreed upon payment amount, which will be the sum of your normal monthly bill plus an additional amount based on the amount in ar-

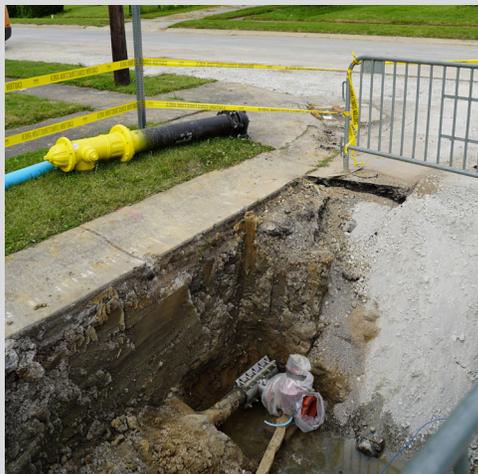
rears, you will not be subject to disconnection. But failure to make the agreed upon payment will result in non-payment disconnection with no additional notice.

We encourage those customers with amounts in arrears to come in and execute a payment plan if they wish to avoid non-payment disconnection.

Please note that these provisions are subject to change with the changing dynamics of the COVID pandemic. Keep watching this newsletter and the City website and social media for updates.

ISSUES FACING SANITARY SEWER OPS

Over the past couple years, I have mentioned many times about the problems we are having with clear water entering our sanitary sewer system, taking up needed capacity for actual sewage waste and contributing to sewer spills and placing a damper on future development. Here is a quick summary of the issues facing in the sanitary sewer operations:



1. Aged and deteriorated infrastructure in the older parts of the City – these old vitrified clay tile pipes are badly deteriorated, have broken lateral connections and customer laterals are typically in as bad of shape as the mains. These defects allow rain/groundwater to seep into the system. The old manholes that are part of the system are old, broken down, and allow significant amounts of water to leak in from the street during rain events.

2. Capacity availability for new development – under our present contract with CEG for sewage treatment, we are authorized 8.0 million gallons per day in Annual Average Daily Flow and 20 million gallons peak daily flow (flow in a 24-hour period). When we exceed these amounts we are subject to additional charges. We have the option to purchase additional capacity, but we will be on the hook for whatever costs that may be incurred by CEG to provide

that additional capacity. Purchasing additional capacity from CEG still does not alter the fact that the real issue is how much clear water we are treating due to reasons noted in Item 1 above. If we were sending to treatment a reasonable amount of flow, based on how much water we provide to our customers (about 4.1 million gallons per day), capacity would not be an issue. It is not a case where our pipes are too small to handle the amount of sewage they were designed for; it is that almost every time it rains, our sanitary sewer system is overwhelmed with rain water.

3. Rates – Sewer rates have not been adjusted since 2009. In 2009 the rates were adjusted in response to the City's receiving an Agreed Order from the EPA. The general idea was that the additional revenue would fund the improvements needed in order to comply with the order. However, we have capi-

SANITARY SEWER ISSUES CONT.

tal needs other than infrastructure improvements that are equally important to our operations. These include purchase of replacement vehicles, sewer cleaning and inspecting equipment, and minor system improvements such as the purchase of replacement pumps for lift stations and grinder pumps, building repairs/improvements, and also includes certain emergency repairs that are of a nature that contractors are required to perform them. Certain small sewer extensions to provide service are also covered with our capital funds. In addition to our capital needs, we have routine operational costs, which tend to increase annually.

The cost for parts, materials/supplies, labor, fuel and many other items tend to go up. If our rates are not keeping pace with rising operational costs, then the corresponding effect is a decrease in the amount of sorely needed capital improvements.

4. Sewage Treatment Costs – are increasing annually under the renegotiated contract with CEG. This makes eliminating sources of clear water from the sewer system even more important. In a nutshell, from 2018 to 2025 we will go from paying roughly \$.75 per thousand gallons in 2018 to \$2.49 starting January 1, 2025. There is

a Phase II of the increase that implements between January 1, 2026 to January 1, 2029. During Phase II we will be brought up to the full Sewer Satellite Rate #6 that is current at that time.

Hopefully, the above will provide a picture of the issues we are facing with the sewer utility and the need to address them. Having chronic sanitary sewer overflow issues (the reason for our Order from EPA) and poor performing sewers as well as capacity issues that are hindering development are all important issues that we must resolve. And it will take investment in our sewer infrastructure to do so.

DESIGNATED EASEMENT AREAS

Lawrence property owners should be aware that there may be drainage or utility easements behind your property or between yours and your neighbor's properties.

These easements are part of your parcel(s), are designated for specific purposes, and may be dedicated to the City. An easement being dedicated to the City does not necessarily mean that they are maintained by the City. Some issues are private property issues that must be addressed by property owners. It is very common that these easements include drainage ditches, storm water pipes and inlets that will help drain your yards and provide discharge points for sump pumps into designated storm sewers.

In investigating drainage complaints, we have been noticing that many drainage ditches in easements behind houses are either filled up with dirt, grass clippings, and other debris by property owners, or have been blocked with fences, sheds or landscape mounds, thereby causing flooding along the easement and to adjacent property owners.

Please keep in mind that property owners are not permitted to perform work such as, but not limited to; moving dirt, building sheds or other structures, adding landscape mounds, installing fencing etc. in the easement areas without approval from the City.

This is very important so as not to block the ditches, thereby flooding the easement and adjacent properties. Also, keep in mind that, if the City has to come in and fix a drainage issue in the easement such as a broken pipe, a damaged manhole /inlet or regrade a flooded ditch to make it drain, anything that has been installed in the easement by the property owner without proper approval will be removed by City and won't be replaced. This is also true of other Utilities that may have infrastructure situated in the easement, such as power lines, phone lines, gas lines, etc.

Where you can find easement locations: Your parcel plat should identify all easements in the parcels. So please look at your plat to make sure you will not be working in easement areas before doing any work within your parcel.



If your project does include encroachment into the easement, please contact the City for guidance. If you are not sure if a problem in the easement is a City or property owner responsibility, you may also call the City DPW Office for guidance at (317) 545-5566.

Thank you,

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