



THE

LAWRENCE LIFT



NEWSLETTER

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DEAR LAWRENCE UTILITY CUSTOMER,

NOTICE: WATER DISCONNECTION UPDATE

Lawrence Utilities will not resume non-payment water disconnections until September of 2020. **The first shut off date will be on September 2, 2020, for the August 10th billing.** Please note that this may change again, so keep an eye on future Lift articles and city social media for announcements.

We strongly recommend and encourage our customers who may be behind on payments and carrying charges in arrears to pay as much of their bills and arrears as possible to avoid non-payment disconnection when we do resume them.

Also, please note that there are agencies such as the Lawrence Township Trustee's office, United Way, 211 Assistance, etc, who may be contacted for assistance. Lawrence Utilities also offers payment extension plans and you may contact the business office at 317-542-0511 for assistance.

Also, please note that Lawrence Utilities does not and will not be calling customers soliciting payment of a utility bill in order to avoid non-payment disconnection!

It has come to our attention that there are phone calls being made from scammers stating that they are "Lawrence Utilities" and have also managed to make it look like the call is coming from our business number (317-542-0511). Please do not engage with these people. Simply hang up.

Our only notification for non-payment disconnection is the usual red "Disconnect" bill. We have not changed our notification procedure due to Covid issues, as the scammers may try to convince you.

SEWER SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

As many of our regular readers will know, our sanitary sewer system is in need of serious attention.

We are suffering from condition, performance and capacity issues brought on by decades of failing to adequately invest in infrastructure renewal, keep up with rising routine operating costs, and issues related to our being connected to the CEG-owned and operated East Marion County Interceptor Sewer, which has capacity issues as well.

We also have a difficult challenge that needs to be addressed involving the 4,000+ feet of sewer pipe that lies along and under the southern border of Indian Lake.

A solution must be found for that too, which would preferably be one that did not entail the same thing

having to be done another 50 years after the present situation is addressed.

The issues facing the Sewer Utility can easily be summarized as:

- Poor condition of older sewers in the older parts of the City
- Chronic Sanitary Sewer Overflow points
- Increasing treatment costs per the contract with CEG for sewage treatment services as well as downstream capacity issues in the East Marion County Interceptor
- Indian Lake Interceptor Sewer issue
- Rising operational costs
- No increase in rates to meet the rising operational and capital investments needed since 2009



In 2009, the sewer rates were adjusted in order to begin addressing all the various issues for which we received an Agreed Order with EPA. That increase would have been fine if, beginning right then, we had no additional annual increases related to operating costs and the sewer system remained stable and unchanging so that the problems existing at that time were all we had to fix.

CONTINUED ON BACKSIDE

SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUED

But we know that neither of those conditions are realistic. The increased funding in 2009 has slowly been rendered ineffective by the continued increase in operating costs since 2009, and the worsening infrastructure condition, which in turn allows more inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the system, which in turn leads to more overflows, degraded system performance and reduced capacity for new development.

In 2019 the Sewer Utility sent 2,221,695,000 gallons of wastewater to CEG for treatment. We billed our customers, based on metered water usage, for 1,279,293,000 gallons.

This means that roughly 942,402,000 gallons of clear water was sent to the treatment plant. This is not an exact number because not all metered water used in a home or business actually goes down the sewer drain.

Some goes to lawn and landscape watering and some to car washing or other outside uses. But it gives one a rough idea of just how much excess water is being sent to the treatment plant.

In 2019, 942,402,000 would have cost us about \$915,800. In 2020, if

we use the same number of gallons, it would cost us \$1,068,663. Until we can make a significant impact on this I&I cost, via system repairs/rehab and replacements, and eliminating illegal connections to the sewer system, such as sump pumps and perimeter/roof drains or other sources of clear water, we will have to factor this expense into our budget needs.

The good news is that, as more and more capital projects are complet-



ed and I&I levels go down, the reduced payments for sewage treatment will have a beneficial impact on sewer rates moving forward.

Investment in fixing our sewer infrastructure will benefit us in the long run by lowering the volume of clear water sent to the treatment plant, address poor system performance, and eliminate chronic SSO's.

Failure to address these funding issues now will cause us to fall further and further behind on infrastructure renewal, prohibit future development and will lead to further regulatory action.

Finally, addressing the sanitary sewer rates so that we are properly operating, maintaining and investing in the sanitary sewer system will be the best way to control future rate increases. Instead of waiting for long periods between rate increases and then having to implement large increases, we should be setting our rates for what is presently needed for operations and capital projects and then following up with smaller on a more regular basis, which are easier to plan and budget for.

Please note that we are only just now gearing up to perform the necessary rate study and we are certainly not considering trying to pass a rate increase ordinance in the midst of the pandemic.

I will be providing additional information as we proceed to analyze rates, costs, capital improvement needs and further develop plans for moving the sewer utility forward.

LABOR DAY FESTIVAL



Keep your calendar open for the September 5th Labor Day Festival honoring our First Responders and Health Care Professionals.

This family-friendly event will include: The World-Famous Lawrence Lion's Fish Fry, food trucks, car show, live entertainment, and a Beer Garden for older (21 and over) kids, and be capped off with a Salute to our First Responders and Health Care Professionals and our equally World-Famous Fireworks Extravaganza!

Thank you,

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Note: The contents contained herein are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice.

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