



THE

LAWRENCE LIFT



NEWSLETTER

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DEAR LAWRENCE UTILITY CUSTOMER,

WALK-IN PAYMENT LOBBY CLOSURE

For our customers, please note that the Utility will be closing the walk-in payment lobby effective December 1, 2020 in an effort to keep our customers and staff safe by eliminating cash handling and in-person transactions. IVR (phone) payment and our eSuite portals will continue to be available for setting up accounts and making payments.

The regular mail may also be used for mail-in payments of check or money orders. If you haven't done so already, you may want to consider signing up for an eSuite account, which allows you to access your account information so you can look at usage history, past and present billings, sign up for e-billing

and recurring credit card payments.



In addition, a new payment kiosk has been deployed inside the Government Center at 9001 E. 59th Street, Law-

rence, IN. An additional drive-up kiosk that will offer 24/7 service will be installed just outside the Government Center and should be up and running by December 1, 2020.

These new payment options accept cash, check or credit card and the outside unit will be accessible 24/7.

As a further help to our customers, the Business Office has also recently moved to performing the Resume Service and Payment Extension documentation without having to have customers come to the Business Office. Please note that Business Office staff will not be processing credit card payments over the phone for customers.

UTILITY BUDGET & SEWER UPDATE

The Utility will be presenting and adopting the water and sanitary sewer budgets for 2021. Look for these documents to be posted to the Controller's web page at: <http://www.cityoflawrence.org/controller>. Once at this page, select the tab for "Financial Information" and you will find a host of financial information for the utility as well as the civil city.

I would like to point out that we are presently conducting a rate study for the sanitary sewer utility, which has not had a rate adjustment since 2009. In addition, the renegotiated sewage treatment contract with CEG, which was approved in 2017, imposes annual rate increases on the satellite communities, including Lawrence, which send their sewage to CEG's sewage treatment plants for treatment and disposal. The rate increase from Citizens was the result of Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission action undertaken to eq-

uitably distribute the treatment costs across their entire customer base. The IURC had determined that Citizens' customers were subsidizing customers



in the excluded cities due to previous contracts that were advantageous to the excluded cities while the customers in Citizens' service area saw increasing rates for sewage treatment.

Thus, legal action to remedy the situation was undertaken and resolved with the renegotiated contracts for the excluded cities. The result is that, between 2018 and 2029, we will see annual increases to our sewage treatment costs until we are paying the full rate under Sewer Satellite Rate No. 6. We have been able to handle these increases from 2018 to 2020, but we

will have to have an increase in 2021 in order to be able to meet these rising costs as well as address the lack of revenue available to operate our sewer utility properly and make sorely-needed capital investments in our sanitary sewer infrastructure brought on by age and inadequate replacement/rehabilitation projects in the past. Like any infrastructure system, there should be a regular program of upgrades and infrastructure renewal by means of either rehabilitation or replacement.

Our sanitary sewer system in the older parts of the City are 60 years old or older. These areas are primarily old clay tile sewers and they are broken down and in poor condition. In many cases we can utilize new Cured-In-Place-Pipe (CIPP) applications to restore these old mains and service laterals, which is a much less disruptive process of main

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UTILITY BUDGET & SEWER UPDATE CONT.

rehabilitation. CIPP can add 50 years of additional life to a pipe, maybe longer in some cases. But there is also a lot of old sewer pipe that is so deteriorated that CIPP is not possible and therefore complete removal and replacement is required. CIPP is nice because you are not digging up the entire street and incurring street replacement costs in addition to the pipe replacement costs. So we have to invest time in investigation via CCTV and physical inspections to determine the best options and then design and build our projects. We also have 26 Sewage Lift Stations that we must operate and maintain. We

have made tremendous progress in replacing or rehabilitating our lift stations, but they still present a significant cost item in our budget with all the various costs associated with operating a lift station. We also need to address 11 years of increased routine operating costs without any rate adjustments. As our operating costs continued to rise after the 2009 rate increase, the amount of funding available for capital improvements kept shrinking.

It is important that we soon take action in our own best interests as a community to provide adequate funding to

properly operate, maintain and invest in our sanitary sewer system. It, like the potable water system, is a bedrock of community health, well-being and economic prosperity. In the coming months we will be providing more information regarding a proposal for a sanitary sewer rate increase that will allow us to start investing in the city's sanitary sewer system for the benefit of our customers both now, and in the future. A rate increase that will position the Sewer Utility to provide for the highest quality sewage collection and removal service to our present and future customers.

WINTER WEATHER IS COMING

With the cold weather on the way, it is a good time to remind our customers to start thinking about weather-proofing their homes to protect against frozen water lines and meters. The Utility has helpful information and tips on the utility web page at <http://www.cityoflawrence.org/utilities/water-sewer>.

Your plumbing contractor is also a great resource to inspect and ensure that adequate protection against damages due to freezing is provided. Please remember that the cost to replace frozen and broken meters are charged to the customer's monthly bill. A little bit of effort in preventing freezing temperatures from causing broken meters is worth it in the long run as meters are not cheap to replace. That is not to mention the inconvenience of being without water for a period of time. If your meter is located outside in a meter pit in the yard, you will want to inspect to make sure the ring and lid are seated securely so that there are no gaps that could allow cold air to get into the pit and freeze the water line and meter. A properly sealed pit will retain the natural heat from the ground inside the pit which helps

prevent freezing. Hot air rises and cold air descends, so gaps will allow hot air out and let cold air in. Your plumbing contractor can assist with this too, as the property owner is also responsible to ensure the integrity of the meter pit.



Winter is also the time when snow and ice can accumulate on sidewalks and residents and business owners should be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that the sidewalks on their property are kept free of ice and snow and other debris that prevent the safe passage of pedestrian traffic, even though they may technically be in the right of way. Keeping tree branches trimmed to a height of 10-feet above the sidewalk is also the responsibility of property owners.

Finally, please be aware that when the snow accumulates, the City's snow plow teams will be out. Residential neighborhoods with cars parked in the street may not be plowed until those vehicles are moved out of the street. Please park your cars in the driveway or garage. The City will make every effort to plow all the streets it is responsible for, but managers will use their judgment as to what level of attention can be provided safely, effectively and efficiently.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salsbery".

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