



If you are paying your utility bill through an outside bill pay company, please update the mailing address and make sure to list your full utility account number for proper posting of your payment to your account. Incorrect or incomplete account numbers can delay posting your payment.

## SEWER RATE STUDY CONTINUES

The sewer rate study is underway but there is nothing to report at this time. Here are some of the key points we discussed with our financial consultant prior to commencing the study:

- ◆ With regard to timing, it is our desire to have the study completed and the new rates adopted so that they take effect

January 1, 2020.

- ◆ The new rates will be phased in over a period of time to be determined, but at least 3 years.
- ◆ We wish to maintain special low volume user rates as we did with the water rate increase in 2017.

We will be providing more information as

the study progresses. After we conclude the study and review it with our chief financial officer, the next step will be to submit and receive approval from the Utility Services Board. From there it will go before the council in a series of meetings including a public hearing.

## SWIF GRANT AND ARP FUNDS

As you may be aware from our July issue of the Lift, we applied for a SWIF Grant with the State. I am happy to report that we did receive a grant for \$2,050,000, which we will match with \$2,050,000 from the recently received ARP funds.

This money will go towards sanitary sewer improvements in the older parts of the city. We have recently scoped about \$11,000,000 worth of sewer improvement projects in this area, and while the grant

funds will certainly help, they will not address all our sanitary sewer issues.



We will also have to address chronic Sanitary Sewer Overflow issues in our upcoming Administrative Order of Consent with the EPA. This will include associated engineering, sewer modeling and flow metering needed to develop the required Sanitary Sewer Corrective Action Plan to fix those issues.

## EPA-RELATED PROJECTS & METERS

With the lack of adequate operating revenue to meet rising sewage treatment costs from Citizens Energy Group, insufficient revenue for routine operations and maintenance costs, and our need for annual capital funds for these EPA-related projects and to fund an ongoing infrastructure replacement and rehabilitation program, the present level of sewer revenues are insufficient. They do not allow us to properly operate and maintain our sanitary sewer system. We must correct this situation. In fact, the EPA is insisting on it. The health and vitality of our community depends on adequate, safe and reliable infrastructure. To provide that, we must be willing to pay

for it. We cannot continue to kick this can down the road. We need to be able to provide updates about our sewer utility along the lines of what I am going to present next!

I am happy to report that we have finally received all the new meters we ordered for our meter change-out project. This 2,500 meter change-out, with our contractor NECO, will commence after the scheduled October 1 progress meeting with the contractor. This represents an investment of over \$1,115,000 in our utility to update the metering part of our operations. Although we are working all over the city



on this project, the biggest affected areas include Briar Creek and Quail Creek Mobile Home Parks; Bay Ridge, Chesapeake, Echo Pointe subdivisions, and the Kingsboro/English Oak Drive area.

## CONTRACT UPDATES

The contractor has started dropping off materials for our Maple/Zoeller/Wallingwood Water Main Replacement Project and also for our Phase II-Contract 'B' water main replacement projects involving 46th Street, Franklin Road, Richardt Street, Elmhurst, Woodcroft, and Hermosa Drive. These projects represent an investment of over \$5,000,000 in addressing our aged and deteriorated water mains in the older parts of the City. These areas have some of our oldest water mains, many of which are undersized and heavily encrusted with years of iron deposits. This encrustation contributes to lower water flows and also 'rusty water' complaints. They also experience higher frequency of failure.

We are also preparing to bid our 52nd

Street elevated storage tank project, which we anticipate may be around \$500,000. The project will go to bid this fall and we anticipate the work being done in the fall of 2022.

As always, we would ask that our customers be patient and cooperative while our contractors are out performing this work in less than ideal circumstances. In many of these areas, space is limited and there will be times when the streets are blocked temporarily or there are detours. Our contractors will do the best they can to perform the work quickly and efficiently, but these are large and involved projects that will simply take time.

For those customers who will have their

yards, driveways or sidewalks disturbed by the construction activity, please know that the contractors will perform the needed restoration work. This work usually is done at the end of the project, just before the pavement repairs are done. Again, we just ask for patience while this work is done.

Finally, most of you will probably have older water service lines. While we are not increasing the pressure at the water plants or towers, the new mains will necessarily flow better and minor pressure increases may be seen. You may want to check your hot water heaters and other fittings and appurtenances for leaks once your service is connected to the new main.



## OLDER METER ISSUES

Customers who had older meter installations with no check valves in the meter pit can experience issues with the pressure relief valve activating on their hot water heaters.

This is because excess pressure built up in the service lines due to heating would relieve itself back into the public main. Since the 1980's, Lawrence has required check valves to be placed on all water services on the customer side of the meter, which prevents this increased pressure from relieving itself into the public main.

If you experience this issue, you will want to talk to your plumber about an expansion tank or pressure regulator installation.

