



SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Adopts FY21 Rates

The Board of the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission adopted FY21 rates at its regular monthly meeting yesterday, June 17, 2020, following a public hearing held on June 2, 2020. The revised proposed rates for combined water and sewer represent an increase of 9.5% for residential customers. The new rates will go into effect on July 1, 2020.

Rate Impact

Amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, the Board of Commissioners worked closely with staff to develop a budget that responded to the need for customer affordability, rapidly changing water consumption patterns, and the critical need to address aging or failing infrastructure, comply with state and federal regulations, and adapt to changing environmental conditions. The Commission also solicited comments and input on the proposed budget from its customers and elected officials through a virtual public hearing held on June 2, 2020.

“The Commission recognizes the current strain the pandemic has placed on many of our customers, but the ability to deliver safe and reliable water and sewer service in order to protect public health and safety cannot be compromised,” said Executive Director Josh Schimmel. “The increase is the result of an incredibly thorough assessment and knowledge of our aging system’s unavoidable needs, and reflects the level of investment that is necessary to minimize the risk of disruption of critical water and sewer service.”

“The Board of Commissioners appreciates the involvement and input received from our customers as well as the mayor and city councilors throughout this process,” said Chairwoman Vanessa Otero. “It is never an easy decision to raise rates, particularly now in light of the pandemic, and the Board worked closely with staff to minimize costs and lower the rate increase amid the continually evolving impacts of the pandemic. The Board made its decision based on the need to balance the evident risks to public health and safety posed by aging or failing infrastructure, as well as the future financial viability of the system, with the need to maintain manageable and stable rate increases for our customers.”



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On July 1, 2020, the new proposed FY21 combined water and sewer rate for residential and commercial customers will increase 9.5%. The residential and commercial water rate will increase from \$3.62 per 100 cubic feet (CCF) to \$3.96 per CCF. The residential sewer rate will increase from \$5.71 to \$6.25 per CCF, and the commercial sewer rate will increase from \$6.28 to \$6.88 per CCF. The typical household water and sewer bill is estimated to increase an average of approximately \$8.86 per month. The rate increases will be applied to water and sewer use beginning July 1, 2020, with the increases reflected in bills issued in August 2020.

Response to COVID 19 Impacts to Customers

In response to the ongoing economic burden created by the pandemic, the Board of Commissioners voted in May to extend the suspension of late fees, shutoffs, and interest for non-payment until August 1, 2020, and to increase the discount for senior citizens and disabled customers from \$33 to \$75 per year effective July 1, 2020. The Commission is also providing the opportunity for longer-term payment plans for customers and businesses that are struggling to make payments. A new customer assistance program targeted to assist low-income households with their water and sewer bills will also be implemented in FY21.

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