

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS- WATER RATE INCREASE

Q: Why is a rate increase necessary?

A: Every year, the costs of operating a water and sewer system goes up. This is largely due to the rising costs of the necessary materials used in the treatment process. It is also due to the increased costs of Electricity, Gas and Fuel. The inflation that takes place in all aspects of our economy also drives up the costs of everything the Utility Department requires. Additionally, there are often unfunded mandates from the EPA regulating the treatment processes. These changes in the requirements are intended to provide an ever improving product to the customer; however, they usually result in additional costs for the Utility Department's operations.

Q: What will this rate increase be used for?

A: This increase will be used to fund the Utility Departments operations budget fund. This fund is used to pay for the expenses required to operate a water and sewer system that is in compliance with the EPA, customer and department standards of safe, reliable and clean water. These expenses include, but are not limited to: electricity, gas, fuel, chemicals used in the treatment processes, equipment maintenance, personnel expenses, EPA required training and certifications, EPA required permits, etc.

Q: How much will this increase be?

A: The rate increase will be implemented in three phases, with one year of no increase between each phase. Each phase will constitute a 5% increase in the water rate and an 8% increase in sewer rates. After all three phases take effect in 2024, the increase will total **\$.71 for water** and **\$1.98 for sewer** per 1,000 gallons used for an In Town customer, **\$1.06 for water** and **\$2.98 for sewer** per 1,000 gallons used for an Out of Town customer. The CIP portion of the customer's bills will remain unchanged.

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Q: How do the City of Pataskala's rates compare to other communities?

A: In a 2018 rate comparison looking at the City of Pataskala and ten other local utilities of similar size, the City of Pataskala had the fourth highest rate before the rate increase, and has the third highest rate after the rate increase. Many communities in the area buy their water from and send their sewer to the City of Columbus instead of operating their own treatment facilities. The Columbus Utilities Department has a lower rate that is then passed on to those communities.

Q: Why are larger cities rates lower than the City of Pataskala's?

A: Rates are affected by many factors, but the simplest answer to this question is the economy of scale. In densely populated areas, there are more people tapped onto the same amount of water and sewer main than there are in an area with less population density. The more people that are tapped onto a pipe, the more customers there are to spread the operations and maintenance costs among, resulting in lower rates per customer.

Q: What can I do to conserve water, thereby lowering my monthly bill?

A: There are many things that we can do to conserve water. The most obvious would be to quickly identify and repair any leaks in your residence. The most common source of wasted water is an unidentified toilet leak. Other things you can do include installing low flow toilets and fixtures. The link below will direct you to information put out by the EPA on how to conserve water in your home, but there are literally thousands of sites online full of tips that can be found with a simple Google search.

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-03/documents/ws-simple-steps-to-save-water.pdf>