



City of Sisters

News Release

Media Contact:

Eileen Stein, City Manager

Sisters, Oregon

April 22, 2011

CITY COUNCIL SET TO APPROVE NEW WATER RATES

The Sisters City Council will consider a resolution to set new water rates at its regular meeting on Thursday, April 28, 2011. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at Sisters City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Avenue. Public comment will be taken before the City Council considers a motion to approve the City's master fee resolution incorporating the new rates.

Over the past several years, the City has reviewed and revised its various utility operations, making sure there is adequate revenue to keep city street, water and sewer systems adequately funded to meet future operational needs. The City Council has been in discussions about water rates since last June. The agreement reached at the City Council's April 21st workshop will increase the base rate for all meter sizes by 4 percent and decrease the base consumption allowance from 1,337 to 1,000 cubic feet. The 99 cents per hundred cubic feet overage rate and the low income overage rate of 74 cents per hundred cubic feet will remain the same. The overage rate is the amount applied to water used over the base consumption allowance.

"This starts the city down the road of encouraging water conservation in keeping with the City's newly adopted Water Management and Conservation Plan," stated City Manager Eileen Stein.

For customers with a three-quarter inch meter, the most common meter size, the base rate would increase from \$19.80 to \$20.59. The low income rate for a three-quarter inch meter would increase from \$14.85 to \$15.44. Customers with one inch and one and one-half inch meters would pay a new base rate of \$23.09 up from \$22.20. The low income rate for customers in this category would increase from \$16.65 to \$17.32. The base rate for a two inch meter would increase from \$24.60 to \$25.58. The base rate for three, four, six and eight inch meters would increase from \$60.00 to \$62.40.

"The new rates are expected to raise sufficient revenue to create an operating contingency that will allow the City Council to continue discussing the Water Fund capital improvement plan," stated Stein. That plan identifies the need for approximately \$675,000 worth of projects to be undertaken in the next few years, including upgrading the city's oldest well and upgrading old pipes to bring them up to standard and provide adequate fire flows. The City Council has spent considerable time debating the need for these projects and how to pay for them. The City Council is also considering a process for reviewing the engineering assumptions behind the plan. This effort will be put on hold for the next several weeks as the City Council's focus shifts to reviewing the city budget for FY 11-12.

Customers who want to know how their monthly bill will change are encouraged to contact City Hall at 549-6022.