



News Release

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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Council Approves First Read of Utility Rate Increase Effective this Fall

At the May 9 meeting City Council approved the first read of an ordinance adjusting the City's utility rate structure which includes a residential and commercial rate increase. The water and wastewater rates charged to customers solely fund the purchase and delivery of utility services and the maintenance of the system. The City has maintained the same utility rate for water and sewer services for the last ten years. Several years of wet summers, along with increased conservation efforts has resulted in reduced water sales. This coupled with increased maintenance costs has prompted the need for an adjustment to the rate structure.

The City purchases water from the Upper Trinity Regional Water District, with the related charges passed through to customers. In addition to the purchased water, the City has five wells in the City that are activated in the summer months to address peak demand. Wastewater from all households is pumped to the lift station at Doubletree Ranch Park and pumped from there to the Lakeview Regional Reclamation Plant in Hickory Creek for treatment. And these charges are also passed through to customers. The City portion of the utility rate structure funds the maintenance and operation of the utility system.

City water charges are comprised of a base rate that includes 4,000 gallons usage and a progressive rate based on usage over 4,000 gallons. Sewer charges are based on water usage with the winter average program utilized to establish a maximum household charge. The majority of costs associated with maintaining the utility system to provide water and sewer service to residents are generally fixed in nature. This supports a change for a higher percent of utility cost to be included in the base rate. The progressive water rate structure currently used will be modified to reflect a flat volume rate for usage over 4,000 gallons and up to 50,000 gallons. Water usage above the 50,000 gallon threshold will be at a substantially higher rate. This water rate structure more fairly distributes the charge for the delivery of water services while allowing for responsible landscape watering and discouraging excessive use. The sewer portion will also see a higher base rate fee with a slight decrease in the volume rate. Commercial users will now be charged the same volume rate as Residential, but with a higher base charge.

The average household during a non-irrigation (winter) month has 8,000 gallon water usage and 5,500 gallon sewer usage, and will see an approximate 20% increase. The average household during an irrigation (summer) month with about 20,000 gallon water usage and 5,500 gallon sewer usage will see an approximate 18% increase. The utility rate increase will go into effect on October 1 to allow time to inform residents of the change and avoid raising rates in concert with the higher usage summer months. Council will consider the second read of the ordinance at their May 23 meeting.

The ceremonial swearing in of newly elected Council members took place at this meeting. Council members Mike Lombardo and Dan Jaworski were sworn in at this meeting. Michelle

Schwolert was elected Mayor Pro Tem and Barbara Fleming was elected Deputy Mayor Pro Tem.

Council appointed Austin Adams to the Planning & Zoning Commission. The vacancy came as Dan Jaworski resigned from the Commission to serve on the City Council.

During the Mayor and Council reports, Mayor Wilcox read a proclamation for National Police Week. More than 20,000 law enforcement officers in the United States have been killed in the line of duty since the first recorded death in 1791. The names of these public servants are engraved on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. New names will be added this spring, including 144 officers killed in 2016 with 19 from the state of Texas. May 15 is designated as Peace Officers Memorial Day in honor of all fallen officers and their families. U.S. flags will be flown as half staff on May 15.

The [HVTV Update](#) informed residents of the upcoming opening celebration of Doubletree Ranch Park scheduled for Saturday, May 13 at 11:00 a.m., Celebrate Highland Village on Saturday, June 3 at Unity Park and Movies in the Park.

The City Council early work session and regular session is available on HVTV (Spectrum 16; Frontier 43) and via website streaming by searching HVTV. The meetings are also available for on-demand viewing on the city website.