

Proposed water rates and charges recommended for approval

Water rates will go up 12 cents a unit for 2017, if a budget recommended for approval by the Board of Water Commissioners at their Sept. 13 meeting is approved by the Saint Paul city council this year. The water service base fee will also increase by \$3 a quarter to \$18 per quarter for residential customers who have meters $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or smaller.

Business and residential customers who have larger meters can expect to pay more based on meter size.

The rate increase reflects continuing decreases in consumption throughout the system. Average residential water use has dropped from 22 units per residential single-family household each quarter to 17 units of water. Based on this average 17-unit quarterly consumption, a residential, single-family household can expect to pay \$12 more per year in the water service base fee and \$8.16 per year more in consumption fees based on a rate increase to \$2.69 per unit on average. (The average of the summer



A member of the public (center table) comments in the public hearing section of the Board of Water Commissioners meeting held at the water utility on Sept. 13. There were three members of the public that offered their concerns over higher water rates and their opposition to raising the rates. After hearing the public, the Board discussed those concerns and offered empathy for their positions. In the final vote on the budget, which included the rate increases, the Board said that they needed to balance the needs of the utility with the higher rates, and voted unanimously to recommend the budget for approval by the city council later this year.

and winter rates.)

This will result in an increase for a residential, single-family household of \$20.16 per year for a total annual cost of \$286.52 in 2017, or \$71.63 a

quarter. This equates to a 7.6 percent overall increase in rates and fees for the average, residential, single-family customer. Individual results will vary.

New high-rate solids contact clarifier being tested at plant

The utility is currently conducting tests to evaluate a new, high-rate lime softening process. The Densa-Deg pilot system is a high-rate, solids contact clarifier. It combines the coagulation, flocculation, sludge re-circulation and sludge thickening into two, conjoined

vessels within one unit. Treatment times run from 27 minutes to 55 minutes, as compared to the system we use now, which could take up to 8 hours or more.

The water quality lab staff has been conducting tests on the treated water and sludge produced

by the Densa-Deg unit around the clock since it was installed on August 1. They are trying to determine if it is a viable alternative to conventional lime softening processing.

The water master plan, devel-

Clarifier continued on page 2

New high-rate solids contact clarifier being tested at plant



Clarifier continued from page 1

opened in 2012, recommends that we replace the existing lime softening basin and the re-carbonation system over the next 20 years and add ozone disinfection. The tests on the new equipment are to help determine acceptable alternative methods for implementing these improvements.

If it proves successful, representatives of the Densa-Deg unit will be invited to bid on future plant upgrades.

Left, a Densa-Deg high-rate, solids contact clarifier being lowered onto a platform outside of the lime room of the plant July 25. Since August 1 it has been run around the clock to test its capabilities.

Trimming Trees



Jon Beck, water utility worker from Vadnais, trims trees alongside the administration building at McCarrons on August 31.

Distribution system tour brings staff out into the field



Bill Strouts, left, and John Pope, cement finishers, pour concrete into a form for curb and gutter work as part of the restoration services crew in distribution. The site was the first stop in the tour of the distribution system on Tuesday, Sept. 13.



A dozen employees from several different divisions took part in a tour of the distribution system on Tuesday, Sept. 13. The four-hour tour took them out into the field to see the work of the distribution crews and the restoration crews along with the tunnels and the Highland Park water tower. Here, Pete Davis, water distribution supervisor, (pointing) explains that his crew is digging out areas for a new main rehabilitation process that provides a structural lining and requires street openings at intervals of about 300 feet. Main rehabilitation can be a desirable and economical alternative to open trenching and replacing water main where street restoration costs are extensive.