

BOWC recommends approval of the 2018 budget and rates



Commissioners Mara Humphrey and Rebecca Noecker listen to a customer during the public hearing on water rates held at McCarrons on September 12. The regular Board of Water Commissioners meeting was held following the public hearing.

Water rates will go up 13 cents a unit for 2017, if a budget recommended for approval by the Board of Water Commissioners at their Sept. 12 meeting is approved by the Saint Paul city council this year. There are no other changes to the rates or fees.

The rate increase is necessary to continue investing in system renewal and to perform critical operations and maintenance.

Based on this average, 17-unit, quarterly consumption, a residential, single-family household in St. Paul can expect to pay \$2.21 more per quarter in consumption fees based on a rate increase to \$2.82 per unit on average. (The average of the summer and winter rates.)

This will result in an increase for a residential, single-family household of \$8.84 per year for a total annual cost of \$295.36 in 2018, or \$73.84 a quarter. This equates to a 3.1 percent overall increase in rates and fees for the average, residential, single-family customer in St. Paul. Individual results will vary.

Managers' Corner **Assessing our infrastructure**

By Dave Wagner

Aging infrastructure and sustainability are issues we hear about in our industry and on a national scale. In 2014, a master plan was developed to identify improvements needed for the utility's aging supply and production infrastructure. A road map for future capital improvement projects and recommendations for detailed condition assessments for our older critical facilities resulted from this study.

We recently completed an assessment of the Mississippi River pumping station, which was constructed in 1924. The building itself remains in good condition, although work is needed to keep it functional for many years to come. We are now in the process of developing construction plans to provide needed scour protection to the building in order to prevent future erosion.

We are also assessing the plant foundation by analyzing the timber piles which support the treatment plant. In order to do so, we are excavating under the building to assess the piles. Yes, excavating under the building is quite challenging! We will be performing this work in the upcoming weeks.

A comprehensive assessment of the 26 miles of supply conduits constructed in the 1920s and 1950s was recently completed. This assessment provides a framework for improvements and also recommends the addition of a corrosion protection system on the steel conduits. Protecting this investment is important, as the cost to replace these pipelines today could exceed \$1 billion.

We have a well maintained utility. Keeping our facilities reliable for future generations is something we must strive to do.

Wednesday, Oct. 4 in the cafeteria

2018 open enrollment information session set

It's time to start thinking about your benefits for next year, especially since we will be switching medical insurance providers, dental plans and how we enroll for benefits.

To answer any questions you might have, an information session will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 4 in the cafeteria in the administration building.

Field employees should come between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. while office staff should plan to attend between 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

If you are going on the system tour starting at 9 a.m., make sure to come early to the benefits enrollment session.

Representatives from Medica, CelioStar, Voya, MN Deferred Comp, Aon, Standard, and life, short- and long-term disability insurance, long-term care insurance, etc., and employee benefits (VEBA, Healthy Saint Paul) will be there.

Sign up for benefits begins on Monday, Oct. 2 and must be completed by midnight on Friday, Oct. 13.

Sign up will be through the city's Employee Self Service, not Benefit Ready as in past years.

There will be new health insurance plans this year to look over and choose from as we will be moving from Health Partners to Medica, which offers four plans instead of two, so you will have to choose a new plan this year.

For more information on each medical insurance option, go to the website listed behind it.

Medica Choice Passport: <https://www.medica.com/employers/find-plans/large-group-plan-options/traditional-plans/medica-choice-passport>

- You may elect either the distinctions (co-pay) plan or deductible plan with this network.

Medica Elect: <https://www.medica.com/employers/find-plans/large-group-plan-options/traditional-plans/medica-elect>

- You may only select the deductible plan with this network.

Park Nicollet First with Medica: <https://www.medica.com/employers/find-plans/large-group-plan-options/traditional-plans/park-nicollet-first-with-medica>

- You may only select the deductible plan with this network.

VantagePlus with Medica: <https://www.medica.com/employers/find-plans/large-group-plan-options/traditional-plans/vantageplus-with-medica>

- You may only select the deductible plan with this network.

Preventative dental will be covered by Medica health plans. However, Health Partners dentists will not be covered by this plan. We will be switching from Health Partners to Delta Dental for additional dental coverage.

Flexible spending accounts must be enrolled in every year.

It is helpful to bring a copy of your current benefits with you to the information sessions.

Utility has three openings for water utility worker II

The water utility has three openings for the position of water utility worker II.

The position responsibilities include but are not limited to locating and operating valves on a water distribution system and water service connections and assisting in the detection of water leaks and controlling main breaks.

Please note that this is a dual title opportunity for current, certified, classified utility employees only. The selected candidates will work as water utility worker II from December 1 through April 1, and default back to their current title for the remainder of the year.

Must have one year experience as water utility worker I or water system worker I. Must possess and maintain a valid Minnesota state class D driver's license or equivalent out-of-state driver's license. Must have no suspensions or revocations for driving-related offenses within the two-year period prior to the date of appointment, excluding parking related offenses.

To apply, you must go online to www.stpaul.gov/jobs and go under internal jobs and select water utility worker II. For more information, you can contact Sandy Kimbrough at 266-6510 or email her at jobs@stpaul.gov.

The deadline for applying is Sept. 18 at 4:30 p.m.