

Utility Rate Review comes to a close

(Penticton, BC – July 25, 2019) – The City has completed a review of its rates for the water, electrical and sanitary sewer utilities. The review recommends a 0% increase to electrical rates, a 0.6% increase to treated water rates, a 4% increase to agricultural water rates and a 9.4% increase to sewer rates each year for the next three years beginning in 2020. The recommended rates ensure the utilities receive the funding needed while balancing concerns of affordability for customers.

“We have taken steps in recent years to properly fund our electrical and water utilities which allows us to hold the rates for the foreseeable future,” says General Manager Infrastructure Mitch Moroziuk. “The sewer utility is currently underfunded and the recommended changes to those rates will help ensure this service receives the investment it needs.”

In addition to assessing the funding needs of the utilities, the review also compared the City’s utility bills with seven other communities in the area and consulted customers on the options before determining the final recommendations. One of the biggest areas of concern for residential customers was an early proposal to increase sewer rates by 16.5% for the next two years to make up the funding requirements needed for projects such as replacing the compost facility at the landfill. Based on feedback from residents and the input of a citizen task force, this initial proposal was adjusted to a 9.4% increase for each of three years to lessen the impact to residents.

“Penticton has been very upfront about the costs of maintaining civic infrastructure and proactive in addressing the funding requirements,” says Mayor John Vassilaki. “Reviews like this help us determine if we are on track with the responsibility of keeping up these services while not forgetting about the needs of residents. I want to thank the citizens who participated in this important process and especially the five-member task force who represented the interests of customers.”

The recommendations were shared with Council at their July 16 meeting and will be included in the annual update to the Fees and Charges Bylaw that takes place each fall. If approved by Council, residents can expect a \$10 per month total increase in their combined utility bills over a three-year period with the average household increasing from \$202 per month in 2019 to \$212 per month in 2022. Residents are encouraged to read the [Council Report](#) at www.penticton.ca for the complete findings from the review including the impacts for commercial, industrial and agricultural customers.

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