

Water rates, insurance costs, increase in Atchison
(KAIR)--A modest increase.

That's what the approved hike for City of Atchison utility rates is being called, with the matter addressed Monday during the regular meeting of the Atchison City Commission.

At issue was the cost of water and wastewater fees for 2018.

The plan was presented to the Commission by Interim City Manager Becky Berger. "Our proposal was to do a modest increase this year, water, just 1%, wastewater and CSO fee, 2%, and then really spend the next year figuring out what really is out there, those long-term liabilities and our infrastructure."

Following brief discussion, the Commission approved the increases unanimously.

With the increase in place, the average City of Atchison water customer, with full utility services, will see a monthly increase of \$1.23.

The minimum bill would increase \$1.09, while those qualifying for Low Income Senior rates will see an increase of \$.76 each month.

Also going up for 2018 is the cost of insurance for City of Atchison employees.

However, following a review of that issue Monday, and discussion by the Commissioners, it was decided that employees should not bear the burden.

With the increase higher than had been anticipated during budget planning by the City, Mayor Allen Reavis proposed that the City absorb the increased cost for the coming year, but begin exploring alternative methods to offset such costs in the future.

"The employees, they have their budget too, and they weren't planning on any increase, so I said in all fairness, I think if there's some way to prevent the employees from having a hit this year...maybe we need to put that out there earlier in the year to the employees, say, okay, look, we don't know where this is going to end up, and have that marker out there so people have a warning there could be a change. There could be some kind of a cost sharing for the following year. I think that's just fair"

Following discussion, the Commission approved the employee insurance plan unanimously.

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