Water/sewer rates could increase with new budget

by Mark Fausz
Village News

Basic utilities prices for the average homeowner could go up in July if the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors (BOS) votes to increase them on March 28 as part of the 2013 annual budget. A public hearing is to be held on March 14 to get public input on the changes.

According to utility department documents presented at last week's budget and audit committee and then during the community development work session at the BOS, rates for both a typical residential water and sewer bills will increase by about $4.28 bimonthly (every other month.)

The new rate is based on a 5/8 inch water service and sewer connection, which is the most common, and is based on a residence using 18 CCF (hundred cubic feet.)

A typical utility bill is likely to rise to $99.04 for a standard four-member family.

The rise on the water side of the bill is related to an increase in water supply purchased from the city of Richmond, according to Roy E. Covington P.E., director of the utilities department for the county.

Covington said, "The projections over the next ten years indicate that current revenues, without fee increases, will not be sufficient to cover operating expenses."

The utilities department is funded entirely by payments for users and fee increases are needed to both comply with regulations of the Chesapeake Bay Act by upgrading pumping stations, replacing and building new water tanks and the replacement of water lines as the county water system ages.

The changes in fees are anticipated to generate $1.4 million in revenue for the utilities department, although water uses throughout the county are expected to decrease by 4 percent due to conservation by customers and a slowdown in home building.

The utilities department continues to maintain its AAA bond rating, which is important to pay for some of the needed projects.

In addition to residential water and sewer supply increases, connection fees are expected to increase as well.

The fee connecting a new sewer line service for a typical residence is proposed from $3,730 to $4,025 (generating an additional $440,000 for the utilities department.)

A normal 5/8 inch water service connection will not increase and will remain at $4,795.

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