

Coleraine Water Meter Project Update

Great progress has been made in getting meters installed in many Coleraine homes, 205 to be exact. The next round of installations will take place in the week of August 10-14. [If you have yet to make an appointment for your installation, please contact Joel Adelman at (507) 820-1008 or via email at jskpadelman@gmail.com]

The next step after the installations is for the Clerk's office to get the new software installed and functioning. The current flat rate billing will remain in place for several months, so you will not see a change in your bill until after the first of the year.

We've received several questions that pertain to the project and the changes it will bring.

Here are some of those questions and the answers:

1) Why are we doing this project to switch to meters?

Three reasons:

- a. It's a more fair and equitable way to charge for water consumption and sewage flow. Currently, a household with one or two people is paying the same as a household with adults and children. Typically, a larger household uses more water, and more wastewater flows through the sewer that needs to be treated.
- b. We will be able to determine a leak or issues before it becomes a major problem, and we can troubleshoot with the homeowner. For example, we might get a 'leak alarm' showing continuous water usage throughout the day, which could indicate a leak or another source of ongoing water consumption. The homeowner can check for a running toilet, leaking fixture, irrigation issue, or an outdoor hose that may have been left on. It might be something explainable like filling a pool or putting in a skating rink.
- c. Billing appropriately for consumption and having solid figures allows the city the opportunity to apply for grants and low interest loans through the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) and USDA-Rural Development that can be used for City Infrastructure Projects like replacing the water and sewer mains in the streets and fixing the streets. The city currently does not qualify because we charge a flat rate for water and sewer.

2) How will this change to meters affect my bill?

Your bill will be based on consumption of water and flow through the sewer.

3) Will there be a base/minimum rate for water?

Yes, there will be a base/minimum charge for water and a base/minimum charge for sewer for XXXX gallons. Then there will be an additional charge for every XXXX gallons **over** the base for each. [The numbers have not yet been determined.] So, a base/minimum charge for everyone, plus a charge for whatever extra you use beyond that base/minimum.

4) When will the billing change?

The city will need 3 to 6 months of meter readings to determine an average for each residence and to assure the fees will adequately cover the expenses of producing water and treating sewage. The average is needed for making adjustments to your billing if you are asked to run your water to protect your home from a freeze up.

5) Will we still pay the Water Treatment Bond and the Capital Improvement Bond that we now pay for \$19/month?

Sort of. We believe this will be built into the base rate.

6) Will a meter reader be coming into my house every month?

No. Everything is sent in over the air using a secure, dedicated radio wave transmission.

7) Who would I contact if I have a problem with the meter in my house?

The City. Call Jason Tabaka, our Public Works Supervisor, at (218) 256-0336.

Residents should always feel free to call with questions that have not been addressed here and we will do our best to get you an answer.

Call (218) 245-2112

We will update this Q&A as new questions are asked and/or new info is available.