

Seeley Lake – Missoula County Water District Notice of Public Hearing

On **Monday June 21, 2021 at 5:30pm** the Seeley Lake Water District will be holding a Public Hearing regarding a proposed rate change/policy change. The Hearing will be held at the **Community Hall, 3248 Highway 83, Seeley Lake.**

This rate change will not affect most of our customers and is primarily a correction to the District's policy. Properties that have summer homes or only use their property seasonally will be the ones affected.

The current policy regarding the Base Fee:

9-11 MONTHLY BASE FEE – Monthly Base Fee will be assessed whenever a customer's installation is active. An active customer's installation shall be a service where the property is occupied and curb-stop is on and the service is usable. Monthly Base charges shall be the charges set forth by the Board of Directors according to the By-Laws of the District and any rule and regulation governing water service thereof. The fees are set forth in Exhibit B attached to these regulations.

The proposed language change to the Base Fee policy (*in italics*):

9-11 MONTHLY BASE FEE – Monthly Base Fee will be assessed *to all active customer water service lines. An active water service is considered any service where the property has a curb-stop and meter and the service line is usable. The Monthly Base Fee will be assessed whether the water service, to the home, is on or off.* Monthly Base charges shall be the charges set forth by the Board of Directors according to the By-Laws of the District and any rule and regulation governing water service thereof. The fees are set forth in Exhibit B attached to these regulations.

Currently the monthly Base Fee (¾" meter – typical residential meter - \$18.90, full ¾" meter - \$23.63, 1" meter - \$33.83, 1.5" meter - \$75.60, 2" meter - \$134.995 & 3" meter & above \$302.40) is charged when your water service is on and active. When your water service is shut off, you no longer pay the Base Fee until the water is turned back on and service is resumed. This policy was put in place 20+ years ago and has done more harm than good to the Water District.

The Base Fee generates the money needed for the daily operation of the Water District and pays for items such as equipment maintenance, state testing, gas in vehicles, chemicals, insurance, payroll, etc. During certain times of the year, a large number of summer homes shut off their water when the owners leave for the winter and they are not charged the Base Fee, resulting in the Water District losing a large amount of revenue that should pay for daily operations. This leaves

the year-round customers to cover the gap in the annual operating costs. As the demographics of the Water District have changed over the years, this policy has become an increasing issue and is unequitable.

Approving the policy change will enable all of our customers that have a useable water service line to pay the Base Fee charge whether the water is on or off, whereby correcting the current situation and distributing the operating costs equally. Most communities charge these fees whether the water is on or off. This change in the implementation of the Base Fee is needed so that the District's rates and charges are fair to all of our customers.

Like I said earlier, this is a change in the implementation of fees and not a water rate increase. This change will only affect those customers that have their water shut off on a regular basis. While we do not like changing policies, especially policies that will affect a customer's bill, this policy must be changed so that the charges are fair to everyone in our Water District.

Again, the Seeley Lake Water District will be holding a Public Hearing in regards to a needed rate/policy change. **The Hearing will be held at the Community Hall, 3248 Highway 83, Seeley Lake at 5:30pm MDT, Monday June 21, 2021.**

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Vincent Chappell, General Manager, at (406) 677-2559. Seeley Lake Water District, PO Box 503, Seeley Lake, MT 59868.