

2023-2024
CITY of WESTFIR
WATER / SEWER POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The public water supply system and sewer collection system of the City of Westfir, Oregon, including all real estate, reservoirs, pumping and treatment equipment, water mains, sewer mains, manholes, valves, fire hydrants, meters, and services up to the lateral lines are owned by the City of Westfir and controlled by the City Operator and their duly authorized agents. City responsibility for installation, maintenance, and quality of materials and workmanship terminates at the customer service valve. All other plumbing is the sole responsibility of the customer and subject to provisions of the Uniform Plumbing Code.

The City does not guarantee to consumers full volume, fixed pressure, or an effective continuous supply of water; such matters being subject to the varying conditions which may disrupt the operation and require maintenance of the mains, services, pumping stations, reservoirs, and other parts of the waterworks system. The City will, in the case of accident or necessity which requires shutting off the water supply, endeavor to notify its customers in advance. This will not occur, however, if a delay would cause a potential hazard to public health and safety or extensive property damage.

APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

Any property owner(s) or duly authorized agent requiring water / sewer service must apply in person at the City Recorder's Office located at City Hall (47441 Westoak Road), showing positive identification and proof of property ownership before services are provided. If the request for service is a new installation, the City Operator or their designee and a Certified Plumber must approve the installation prior to tapping.

A security deposit equal to one month's base rate is required for each new account for water / sewer service. The deposit will be required of the following specified customers of the City of Westfir who are starting service and maintaining accounts:

1. A new customer with the City of Westfir who has no prior credit experience with the City.
2. A tenant customer authorized to open an account by the property owner(s).
3. A customer who had a delinquent account with the City in the past.

The City of Westfir will return any remaining balance of the deposit to a non-tenant customer after a one-year period, provided the customer has kept his/her account current for the preceding 12-month period.

A tenant's deposit shall be held by the City of Westfir and applied to the final billing when the tenant moves from the account address. Any excess balance between the deposit and final billing shall be refunded to the tenant.

Should a customer move from one Westfir premise to another Westfir premise, the City will transfer any credit on the account, and/or the deposit, to the new account; existing accounts must be paid in full before they can be closed. Should a customer move outside Westfir jurisdiction, credit shall be applied to the final bill.

Water service can be refused to an applicant under any of the following conditions:

1. When the premise to be served does not abut a public street, road or way, and the City of Westfir does not have accessibility to the property through an existing easement.
2. When a water main has not been installed to the property to be served, and it would be impractical to extend a main as determined by the City Operator.
3. When in the judgment of the City Operator, the existing water main is of insufficient size to supply the additional demand and maintain satisfactory service to established customers.
4. When the applicant is delinquent in the payment of previous rents, charges, or assessments.
5. When the property to be served is not within the incorporated limits of the City of Westfir and an annexation agreement has not been executed by the owner(s) of the property, as may be required by the City.

ACCOUNTING & BILLING

Owner(s) of real property supplied with water / sewer by the City of Westfir shall be liable for charges for water / sewer service supplied to the premise. Service may be terminated or denied at any premise that has outstanding water or sewer charges, or to any person who has outstanding water or sewer bills with the City of Westfir. The agreement by the City of Westfir to carry an account in the name of a tenant or other non-owner in no way relieves the owner(s) of liability for charges to the premise.

Bills are processed and mailed by the first day of the month and are due and payable by the 25th of each month, and payment must be received by that date.

Accounts not paid by the 25th day of the month are subject to a late fee of 10% of the account balance, and the billing will be printed on colored paper.

Accounts unpaid by the 10th day of the month following a missed payment shall be considered delinquent and the City will initiate the shut off procedure.

Water shut off procedures will include a post card sent via USPS, and a door hanger hand delivered by a City employee. The notice will state the action needed to maintain service and will provide at least 72-hour notice of shut off.

Accounts that are delinquent twenty dollars or less will receive notice but will not be shut off. Accounts that are delinquent more than twenty dollars will be shut off.

Accounts that are shut off will require payment in full for the account balance plus a \$50.00 restoration fee before services are restored.

The City Recorder will endeavor to give proper notice of water / sewer service charges, but by law cannot guarantee delivery of mail. Failure to receive a monthly billing by mail shall not excuse customers from prompt payment of bills.

Water accounts are established and assigned to the property itself. Billings are sent in care of individuals. Owner(s) of property will be held responsible for water used on or in their premise, but payments will be accepted from tenants under the following conditions:

1. The tenant must furnish the City Recorder with the name and address of the property owner(s) when applying for service.
2. The tenant must show a current lease or the most recent rental receipt to the City Recorder, or the landlord must sign the service application, and:

Any delinquent accounts by a tenant will have a duplicate late notice generated and mailed to the owner(s) of the property where service is provided. Property owners who have tenants on an account that has been activated previous to the implementation of these policies is responsible for contacting the City Recorder to assure that they are properly noted as the owner in the billing records.

Checks returned for insufficient funds are subject to a \$20.00 charge, and this charge and amount of the bill must be paid to the City Recorder’s office with cash, cashier’s check or money order. The City Recorder will contact the customer by phone, email, or mail with regards to returned checks, however, checks returned on an account that is already delinquent is subject to immediate shut-off. Three returned checks in a 12-month period will authorize the City Recorder to refuse payment by check for two years of service from the date of the last check. During the 24-month period, payments must be made with cash, cashier’s check, or money order.

ACH payments denied for insufficient funds are subject to a \$10.00 charge. The City Recorder will contact the customer by phone, email, or mail regarding the denial. The customer may request the transaction be tried a second time, with the addition of the \$10.00 fee. However, an ACH payment returned on an account that is already delinquent is subject to immediate shut-off. Three ACH denials in a 12-month period will authorize the City Recorder to refuse payment by ACH withdrawal for two years of service from the date of the last withdrawal. During the 24-month period, payments must be made by check, cash, cashier’s check, or money order.

WATER AND SEWER: RATES AND CHARGES

To provide funds necessary for the operation and maintenance of the municipal water and sewer systems, the Westfir City Council has approved resolutions establishing rates and charges.

CHARGES FOR NEW CONNECTIONS TO THE WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM

Water Connection (tap) Charge	
3/4” meter (for 3/4” line)	\$600.00 (Westfir standard size)
1” meter (for 1” line)	\$650.00
1 ½” meter (for 1 ½” line)	\$750.00
2” meter and over (for 1” and over line)	\$1,000.00
Sewer Connection (tap) Charge	\$400.00

Water meters damaged by the owner or tenant shall be repaired or replaced by the City, with the actual cost being assessed to the property owner.

All water and sewer taps may be subject to a maximum waiting period of up to 30 days, dependent upon City Operator schedule and availability of materials.

MONTHLY RATES

Water Service

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling:
3/4” line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$52.00

Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling:
3/4” line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$62.00

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, Business, or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling:

Usage of 7,001 to 12,000 gallons	\$5.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage between 1,000 increments	\$00.005 per gallon
Usage of 12,001 gallons and over	\$10.00 per 1,000 gallons
Usage between 1,000 increments	\$00.010 per gallon

Temporarily Unoccupied (0 gallons per billing cycle)

<i>Residential Dwelling</i>	\$25.00
<i>Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling</i>	\$35.00

Sewer Service

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, Business, or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling:

Base Rate: (All year) \$56.00

Additional Winter Flat Rate: (November 1 – May 31)

Usage of 7,001 to 12,000 gallons \$20.00

Usage of 12,001 gallons and over \$50.00

In the event that a single meter serves two or more residential or commercial units, the applicable base rates per billing period shall be charged to the owner(s) for each unit served.

The rates and charges listed in this policy are subject to review and adjustment by the City Council. (See attached sample rate schedule.)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CUSTOMERS

It is the responsibility of the resident or property owner(s) to keep the water meter accessible to City employees for purposes of meter reading, emergency shut off, leak repair, etc. In the event that a meter is inaccessible for any reason, the City reserves the right to estimate the meter reading and to issue bills calculated upon estimated usage.

It is the responsibility of the owner(s) of the property to maintain all piping and plumbing fixtures past the City water meter in good condition.

It is the responsibility of the owner(s) of the property to maintain the sewer lateral to the City sewer main. The City will not be responsible for broken, plugged, or otherwise inoperable sewer laterals. When the City sewer main is located beneath a County maintained street, the County will saw-cut the paving, tamp the completed back-fill in the trench, and repair the street cut. It is the responsibility of the property owner or his contractor to coordinate this operation with the County.

NON-PAYMENT & COLLECTION

When water / sewer charges are unpaid for at least 60 days, and when an unpaid bill has arisen from a service contract made directly with the owner(s) of the property served by the connection as described herein, the City may file a lien against the property by certifying the unpaid amount plus any associated penalties to the Lane County Clerk. The City Recorder will send the property owner(s) notice of the impending certification at least 30 days prior to the certification in accordance with the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). If, however, the City determines that a transfer of the property is about to occur, it may file the lien without having to meet the requirements that the charges be unpaid for 60 days and the property owner received 30 days' advance notice of the impending action.

Any lien for unpaid water / sewer charges will be immediately released upon payment in full of the amount certified as unpaid charges and penalties.

Water shut off procedures will include a post card sent via USPS and a door hanger hand delivered by a City employee. The notice will state the action needed to maintain service and will provide at least 72-hour notice of shut off. If services are shut off, there will be an additional \$50.00 fee for restoring services.

Any customer or property owner may discontinue water service and be exempt from regular billing by requesting a final bill from the City Recorder and having the curb stop turned to the “Off” or closed position and locked by the City Operator.

DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS

Procedures for resolving disputes have been established as follows:

Step 1 - Customer notifies the City Recorder and presents a thorough explanation as to why they feel the City is in error. The City Recorder will research the problem within five (5) working days of the customer request. An answer will be transmitted to the customer within ten (10) calendar days of the original complaint.

Step 2 - Should the customer be unsatisfied with the answer received in Step 1, the customer may request a hearing before City Council. The hearing shall be held at the next regular City Council meeting. The customer shall present all information to City Council to justify their claim. City Council shall make a written decision within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision of City Council is final.

SERVICE CALLS

Service calls will be made during regular working hours and without charge for the following purposes:

- 1) Leak investigation
- 2) To locate City-owned portions of the system
- 3) Meter inspection
- 4) Opening and closing accounts
- 5) Collection of water samples

If during investigation it is determined that a leak is in the customer’s portion of the system, the City will turn off water at the curb stop. The customer is responsible for accurately locating the leak and any associated repair costs. Following repair, service may be restored by a City employee or plumber. There will be a charge for service calls outside of normal working hours, which will equal the cost of manpower expended by the City.

Any required repair to the curb stop, meter, or any customer service will be performed by the City during normal working hours as soon as it can be scheduled.

GENERAL INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS

Cross Connections

No physical connection between the public water supply and any other source of water or other liquid is allowed unless the auxiliary or other water system, and the method of connection and use of such system, has been approved by the City Operator, the Oregon Department of Health, and the Department of Environmental Quality. Annual testing and inspection of back-flow devices are required at the customer's expense.

Waste Materials & Discharge

No filth, animal matter, or any other substance may be placed in any city water system or reservoir, and no prohibited materials as outlined by City, County or State Codes may be discharged into the sewer system. Also, it is not permissible to make any storm sewer connection, such as a rain downspout, to the sanitary sewer.

Freezing

The City will not assume the cost of thawing water services on the customer's side of the service valve. The customer must demonstrate that their portion of the service line is not frozen before the City will attempt to thaw the line on the street side of the curb stop. It is the City's policy not to use electric welders to thaw services.

Repairs

Failure of the property owner(s) to make repairs in a timely fashion, when necessary, can result in the water being turned off at the curb stop until such repairs are made. Should it be determined that a broken service line is causing a traffic hazard or property damage to others, the water may be turned off immediately without notice. The customer should make arrangements for a temporary water supply until such time that the necessary repairs are made.

Fire Hydrants

With the exception of an authorized agent of the City, County, or State, or the Oakridge Fire Department, NO person shall take water from any fire hydrants under any circumstance. Water used from hydrants to provide potable water for fire camps or other temporary emergency installations may be metered and charged at the prevailing user rate and may be subject to an administrative charge. The City Operator will designate the hydrant to be used. Arrangements must be made in advance at City Hall, unless an emergency situation arises, and the Mayor or City Recorder gives approval.

Tampering and Theft

No one may connect to, tamper with, or remove any meter seal, or insert a meter bypass to any public water line without permission of the City Operator or his/her agents. No one may operate, open, or otherwise tamper with any valve after it has been closed for violation of any rule or regulation of this Policy. No one may, in any way, take water for private use unlawfully without first having secured the necessary permit from an authorized representative of the City.

If the City Operator finds evidence of water being unlawfully reconnected after having been turned off, that a meter seal has been broken, any bypass has been inserted, or that a meter has been tampered with, it will result in the disconnection of service by removal of the meter. In order to restore service the customer shall pay a \$200 meter installation fee, costs incurred to repair and reconnect the service branch, past due amounts, late fees, a one month deposit if not on file, and a \$50 reconnect fee. The City retains the option of replacing the service branch with new materials, if necessary.

The criminal laws of the State of Oregon provide penalties for tampering with water meters, meter seals, etc. Criminal penalties are in addition to the penalties provided herein. Making payment to City Hall will not relieve a person from criminal prosecution.

Sample Rate Schedule (Subject to Annual City Council Review)

(Current Year) July 1, 2023:

Monthly Water Rate

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling

3/4" line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$52.00

Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

3/4" line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$62.00

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

Usage of 7,001 to 12,000 gallons \$5.00 per 1,000 gallons

Usage amounts between 1,000 increments \$0.005 per gallon

Usage of 12,001 gallons and over \$10.00 per 1,000 gallons

Usage amounts between 1,000 increments \$0.010 per gallon

Temporarily Unoccupied (0 gallons per billing cycle)

Residential Dwelling \$25.00

Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling \$35.00

Monthly Sewer Rate

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

Base Rate (All year) \$56.00

Usage of 7,001 to 12,000 gallons \$20.00 flat rate (November 1 – May 31)

Usage of 12,001 gallons and over \$50.00 flat rate (November 1 – May 31)

July 1, 2024:

Monthly Water Rate

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling

3/4" line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$54.00

Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

3/4" line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$64.00

Monthly Sewer Rate

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

Base Rate \$59.00

ALL ELSE REMAINS THE SAME AS PREVIOUS YEAR

July 1, 2026:

Monthly Water Rate

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling

3/4" line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$56.00

Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

3/4" line – **Base Rate** for 1 to 7,000 gallons \$66.00

Monthly Sewer Rate

Individual Detached Residential Dwelling, Business or Any Combination of Business and Dwelling

Base Rate \$62.00

ALL ELSE REMAINS THE SAME AS PREVIOUS YEAR