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Clean water is always there because we’re always here.®
There's a virtual public hearing on December 6.
The Board of Commissioners is holding a virtual public hearing Monday, December 6 at 6:00pm to receive public comment on, and consider adoption of the 2022 draft budget and proposed water and sewer rate adjustments.

**Water rates** — The District is proposing a total adjustment to water revenue of 3.75%, which would be applied to both the fixed water charge and the variable water consumption charges. A single-family residential customer using between 400-700 cubic feet per month would see a monthly increase ranging from $1.56 to $1.81 on their water bill.

**Sewer rates** — The District is proposing an adjustment to sewer revenue of 3.5%, which would increase the monthly sewer rate for a single-family residential sewer customer by $1.33 to $39.29 per month.

Please join us! Learn about how rates pay for the costs of operating and maintaining your water and sewer systems while also providing funds for repair and replacement of pipes and facilities. Information on how to attend or provide public comment can be found at spwater.org.

General election results.
As of this writing, the unofficial results from the general election on November 2 indicate that Commissioners Mary Shustov and Nav Otal will maintain their positions on the Board. Final election results will be certified November 23.

Upcoming District holiday hours.
While our offices still remain closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will have the following shortened staff hours during the holidays. For emergency service, call 425.392.6256 and follow the prompts to reach on-call staff. We wish you and yours a safe and healthy holiday season!

Thur. December 23
8:00am - 12:00pm
Fri. December 24
Closed
Fri. December 31
Closed

Board of Commissioners rescinds the District’s COVID-19 local declaration of emergency.
Normal billing and collections policies and procedures will resume January 1, 2022.

On November 1, the District’s Board of Commissioners rescinded its prior declaration of a local emergency relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the previous emergency declaration, the District suspended normal billing and collections policies such as service terminations, late fees and interest charges. These billing and collection policies and procedures will resume January 1, 2022.

The District is continuing to work in good faith with our customers to agree upon formal repayment agreements of any delinquent amounts. Customers who are not formally entered into a repayment agreement by January 1, will be subject to the District’s normal collections policies and procedures. We understand and appreciate the difficult challenges everyone has been facing and it is our privilege to serve you. We strongly encourage customers with significant past due balances to address them now and reach out to our staff to make special payment arrangements if needed. While the District will extend reasonable payment terms, we are unable to “forgive” water and sewer charges under state law.
An update on Per- and Poly-Fluroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Here’s an update on the continued efforts District staff and your Board of Commissioners are taking to protect your drinking water from PFAS.

What are PFAS?
Per- and Poly-Fluroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a family of man-made chemicals that are not found naturally in the environment. PFAS are found in many common consumer products such as food packaging, non-stick cookware, stain resistant carpet treatments, water resistant clothing, cleaning products, paints, firefighting foam, and some cosmetics. PFAS are also used in many industrial processes and for other applications such as firefighting. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse health outcomes in humans.

The Board is evaluating options for treatment.
The Board of Commissioners is still evaluating when and whether to proceed with construction of treatment facilities based upon further evaluation of emerging state and federal water quality requirements, costs, available state and federal grants, rate impacts to customers, and customer input. This Board should complete their evaluation and provide direction sometime in 2022.

An update on District Wells 7, 8, and 9.
PFAS water treatment plant — The District engaged an engineering firm to design a potential water treatment plant that would remove PFAS from Wells 7, 8 and 9. The design is nearing completion. Taking proactive measures to design this treatment plant puts the District in a better position should treatment be required in the future to continue meeting state or federal drinking water regulations. If built, the treatment plant is estimated to cost $18 million. In addition to a tentative federal appropriation of $1.585 million, the District is actively pursuing other grants and funding assistance to offset the financial impact to ratepayers. Even though the District was not responsible for the presence of PFAS in the District’s water, we continue to advocate on behalf of our customers to hold those responsible for the contamination, accountable for future treatment costs.

Permanent water right — In June, the temporary water right previously granted by the WA Department of Ecology to combine production from Wells 7, 8 and 9 was approved to become permanent. This new water right allows the District to draw water from Well 9, a well with lower levels of PFAS below the existing USEPA health advisory level, and State Action Levels. Wells 7 and 8 remain available to use in an emergency.

Thank you to Representative Kim Schrier for a tentative federal appropriation of $1.585 million!
The District would like to express its thanks to Representative Kim Schrier and her staff for taking specific interest in our situation. Rep. Schrier has advocated on behalf of our community’s needs by including the treatment plant as part of her Community Project Funding priorities.

District detects PFAS in Wells 1, 2, and 10.
As part of an internal investigative process, the District detected PFAS in Wells 1, 2, and 10 in the Plateau Aquifer. The PFAS levels are below the existing USEPA health advisory level, and State Action Levels. The District has worked with consultants to develop testing and monitoring plans for wells 1, 2 and 10, and will continue to assess these new findings moving forward.
(PFAS con’t.)

**How drinking water regulations are established.**
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets standards and regulations to control the level of contaminants in the nation's drinking water. Once a contaminant such as PFAS has been identified and scientifically shown as potentially having negative public health consequences, a federal rule making process takes place to establish drinking water regulations. As a public water system, the District is required to meet these federal regulations. Under the EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Act, individual states also have the opportunity to set and enforce their own more stringent drinking water standards, which the District must also meet.

**WA State adopts PFAS State Action Levels.**
On October 13, the WA State Board of Health approved updates to the *Drinking Water Regulations for Group A Water Systems* (Chapter 246-290 WAC). This revision establishes PFAS State Action Levels (SALs) that require water systems to test for PFAS compounds and report to the state and their customers if PFAS levels exceed the SALs. **PFAS levels in active District wells are below the adopted SALs.**

During the rulemaking process, the District provided comments on the updates including The Department of Health’s proposal to assign responsibility for investigating the source of PFAS contaminations and environmental analysis to water purveyors. While the District agrees that such investigations are important in developing long-term remedies, the District’s position is that water purveyors should not be required to bear the cost or responsibility for investigating the cause of PFAS contamination since water purveyors aren’t responsible for causing the PFAS contamination and need to dedicate resources to addressing PFAS that are detected in their water supplies.

**District files lawsuit against PFAS manufacturers.**
The District has engaged with a group of law firms and initiated a lawsuit against 3M Company, E.I. DuPont de Nemours, Inc., and other primary PFAS manufacturers for their involvement in the manufacture, promotion, and sale of the chemical. As the manufacturers and sellers of PFAS containing products, 3M, DuPont, and other defendants knew or had reason to know that these products would pollute groundwater, yet failed to take reasonable and available steps to avoid the use of PFAS in products and failed to provide warnings that using these products as directed could result in groundwater contamination. We are seeking to hold the defendants liable for the damages to our water supply.

*For additional information, visit www.spwater.org/pfas*

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**Sewer capacity update.**

On August 24, the sewer moratorium expired. After working diligently evaluating sewer capacity and identifying solutions to provide additional capacity, there was no longer a reason to limit new sewer connections.

The Board of Commissioners implemented a sewer moratorium in the North Sewer Service Area to allow the District to pause new connections, evaluate metrics, and further assess the implementation of immediate and interim improvements designed to ensure sufficient sewer capacity for new growth. The moratorium followed District concerns about sewer flows during high flow events that approached the recommended capacity of certain facilities. It is important to note that **no system failures or overflows have occurred.**

**Why did the District allow the sewer moratorium to expire?**
The decision to allow the sewer moratorium to expire was based on internal analysis and assessments of several aspects regarding sewer capacity including:

- The identification of immediate and interim improvement projects that can increase capacity of the sewer system, and their anticipated time of implementation. Details on these projects can be found at [LetsTalkAboutOurSewer.org](http://www.letsstalkaboutoursewer.org)

- An analysis and understanding of the estimated timing of new connections based upon multiple factors including: previously issued Certificates of Sewer Availability, Developer Extension Agreements, and the average numbers of annual connections for properties transitioning from septic to sewer service.

- Ongoing efforts to identify potential sources of Infiltration and Inflow.
(Sewer con’t.)

Background

The District contracts with the King County Wastewater Treatment Division to send our wastewater to their regional facilities for treatment and disposal. Since the District began providing sewer service, King County has planned on the sewer flow from the Sammamish Plateau to be divided: About half of the District’s wastewater would flow to the south around the south end of Lake Sammamish. The other half would flow north through a future-planned northern connection known as the Sammamish Plateau Diversion. The District has designed its local sewer infrastructure anticipating a northern connection and for several decades has been giving King County notice that our facilities would be reaching capacity to continue to convey all sewerage to the one southerly regional connection.

Meeting local sewer capacity needs.

The District has found solutions to expand capacity of the sewer system until King County brings additional regional infrastructure to the District. We expect some of the District-initiated solutions to come online by the end of this year, while long-term permanent improvements are built. With the sewer improvements now planned, the District will have more than enough sewer capacity to accommodate the City of Sammamish’s growth target adopted by King County’s Growth Management Planning Council in June of this year.

North Sewer Service Area Smoke Testing Project

In August, the District hired a consultant to conduct smoke testing in North Sewer Service Area. Smoke testing is a common method used to locate infiltration and inflow (I&I) sources in the sewer system that can reduce pipe capacity (see diagram). Smoke testing is also used to find illicit connections to the sewer system, which, if disconnected, can reduce sewer flow and free up capacity that can be transferred to additional connections.

The smoke testing revealed minor defects and illicit connections within the sewer system. The District has directly notified the affected customers and are working with them to resolve the issues. According to the consultant’s final report, when all defects and illicit connections are resolved, the District expects to gain additional capacity equivalent to 174 homes in the North Sewer Service Area. We expect that these issues will be resolved by December 1.

For more information and the latest updates, please visit LetsTalkAboutOurSewer.org.
While you protect yourself in an earthquake, we’re protecting the water and sewer system.

We may not have hurricanes and tornadoes in our region, but we are all aware of the threats posed by earthquakes. This is why we’re always looking at ways to be prepared for these realities.

**7MG water tank seismic improvement project.**

Work is underway on the seismic retrofit and tank coating project for the 7-million-gallon (7MG) water tank located on SE 47th Way. This improvement project will help maintain water quality, improve distribution, and increase the tank’s seismic stability. Construction crews will provide improvements to the tank’s existing anchorage system, improve the tank’s venting system, and provide safety improvements for tank access and maintenance. The project will also include the replacement of exterior and interior coatings, and a new landscape mural. Follow the progress of this project at [www.spwater.org](http://www.spwater.org).

Aerial photo by Reid Middleton