

Commissioners' Corner



Laura Belvin

As we begin a new year it is always helpful to reflect on where we've been, where we're going, and what steps we can take along the way to get there. Our utility is constantly evaluating and planning how to best provide reliable service to our customers. You can help us, too.

As a new commissioner, I have been so pleased to meet the staff and work with the utility leadership this past year. They amazingly tackled the Covid-19 crisis and, as essential workers, continued seamlessly

providing water and sewer service while protecting themselves and the public. Our utility workers don't often get remembered along with nurses and grocery clerks as essential personnel, but they need to be recognized for their sacrifice and contribution to our lives during this crisis. Please thank a utility worker!

Despite managing a crisis, we have been continuing normal operations. In addition, we are updating our water meters to be read remotely and have upgraded our UV disinfection at our wastewater treatment plants. We are excited about progress on the new administration building, which will provide long overdue needed space for our staff. The water and sewer industry all over the country is experiencing challenges: aging infrastructure, tightening regulations, and an aging workforce. Our treatment plants are over 30 years old, and are in need of expansion to meet both the needs of the population over the next 30 years and anticipated additional discharge regulations. The Board and utility leadership have had the foresight to plan for these future needs that are coming at us sooner than expected.

Every day our staff takes the steps to continue to provide clean water and reliable sewer service. But you can help us, too. Please only put the three P's down the drain: pee, poop and paper. Please, no fats, oils, grease, garbage, medications, harsh chemicals, paint, solvents, wipes, personal hygiene products, or excess food waste. If you put these down the drain, we have to take it out. Please also keep extra water out of the drains by not piping rainwater into the sewer system.

Continued...

Lakehaven Links

Our Mission

The Lakehaven Water and Sewer District is committed to the continued delivery of safe, reliable and high quality drinking water and environmentally responsible sewer service to our customers.

Board of Commissioners

Ron Nowicki, President

Len Englund, Vice President

Don Miller, Secretary

Laura Belvin, Commissioner

Peter Sanchez, Commissioner

Regular Board of Commissioners meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month. Please check the website for meeting information.

Contact Us

Federal Way: 253-941-1516

Tacoma: 253-927-2922

After Hours Emergencies:
253-941-1516

Business Hours:

Monday – Friday

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

www.lakehaven.org

Commissioners' Corner, cont. from page 1

You can also help by encouraging jobs seekers to consider our industry. We'd love to talk to school groups and colleges and can provide educational materials and tours. Our industry is very STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) and environmentally engaging, and has great benefits and opportunities for advancement.

I am grateful for the privilege of serving as a commissioner this year and for the hard work, dedication and foresight of those in our essential utility. Together, we all can ensure clean water and reliable sewer service well into our future.



5 Tips to Prevent Frozen Pipes

Don't let frozen pipes damage your home. Check out these 5 tips to prevent frozen pipes.

1. Drain exterior faucets
2. Wrap pipes in heat tape
3. Open cabinet doors
4. Insulate and caulk
5. Turn up the heat

District Rates to Increase in 2021

As established during the Board of Commissioners' 2020 rate study, monthly water rates will increase in 2021 by approximately 2.5%. Sewer rates will increase by approximately 8.25% in the same period. Although the Board will be looking at rates for years 2022 and beyond as part of a rate study to be done in the middle of this year, the rates are currently projected to increase by the same percentages through 2024.



The larger increases planned for sewer rates are driven largely by the need for the District to expand and upgrade the wastewater system over the coming years. In particular, the District will be devoting a large portion of its capital improvement program dollars over the next ten years to the two wastewater treatment plants. Some of the upgrades are driven by regulatory requirements that have been mandated for wastewater plants that discharge treated effluent to the Puget Sound.

The rates for those in the City of Federal Way will include the 7.75% excise tax levied by the City. These taxes were already included in 2020 rates. It is anticipated that customers in unincorporated King County will see an increase in rates in 2021 or 2022 to address the right-of-way rental charge that King County is imposing on utilities with facilities located in King County right-of-way.

Despite the increases, District water and sewer rates will continue to remain at the lower end of rates charged by neighboring water and sewer utilities. Stay tuned for the March/April Newsletter, which will contain our 2021 Water and Sewer Rate Survey.

2020 Poster Contest Winners

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the District was able to hold its 24th annual Water Conservation Poster Contest. With restriction on in-person meetings, the awards ceremony typically held for the winning students, their families, and teachers was not held. 112 poster entries were submitted from four Federal Way Elementary Schools (Rainer View, Lake Grove, Meredith Hills and Mark Twain), and thirteen winning posters were selected to include in the District's 2021 Water Conservation Calendar.

A special "Thank you!" goes out to Qualstar Credit Union and Costco for their generous donations to the contest winners. We'd also like to thank all of the teachers and family liaisons who helped to make this year's Water Conservation Poster Contest a success.



Featured: 1st Place winning poster, created by Judy M. of Rainier View Elementary.