

December 2020 – Utility Cost Information

Murray City provides and bills for power, water, sewer, stormwater, and garbage collection. You may be billed for only a few of these services depending on where you live. The city has recently received questions from some of our utility customers about a noticeable increase in their bill. There are several reasons why customers may have experienced an increase in their utility bill, which are explained below.

EQUAL PAYMENT PLAN

Customers on the equal payment plan may have noticed an increase (or decrease) on their recent bill. Equal payment plans are adjusted annually, in October, based on usage. While being on equal pay is helpful for budgeting expenses, customers still need to be aware of their consumption. If they consume more than their equal pay amount covers, the balance owing will be calculated into the payment amount for the next year, along with the increased average consumption per month.

WATER

The legislature passed a bill requiring water providers to implement a tiered water rate structure to encourage conservation. The result is the more water one uses the more one will pay. Murray City contracted with Zions Public Finance to complete a water rate analysis and assist in developing the tiers and rates. While the study projected water revenue to remain the same, some users would pay less while others would pay more than their historical use.

It's important to keep in mind that the Wasatch Front just experienced a very dry summer with multiple days of record-setting high temperatures. Excess water usage, billed on a higher tier level, increased many water users bills. Another reason is that many customers are now home more often. Telecommuting and homeschooling generally result in increased consumption of power and water.

Furthermore, the city instituted a 5-year water rate increase in 2018 to fund many water infrastructure projects such as upsizing water line, replacing old wells, and repairing storage tanks. This increase is effective each March. For example, a $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" meter (common for residential homes) base rate went from \$10.60 to \$11.24. [Section 13.08.020](#) of the Murray City Code outlines the different base and tiered rates, and the dates of scheduled increases. Small annual increases allow the city to complete maintenance of our infrastructure and are less impactful on our customers than a large increase every few years.

SEWER (or wastewater)

Sewer rates are not on a tiered billing system. Sewer bills are based on water usage during winter months. Sewer rates are also on a 5-year increase plan, with the most recent change going into effect on Nov. 1. [Section 13.32.060](#) of the Murray City Code provides the base rate and flow rate charge. Normally, one wouldn't expect to see a significant increase in sewer charges unless a customer continues to use water outside during the winter months or has experienced a leak.

STORMWATER

Stormwater rates are also adjusted annually, with an increase occurring on July 1. In 2020, the monthly fee went from \$4.65 to \$5.65 for each equivalent residential unit (ERU). In 2021, the scheduled increase will be \$6.30/ERU. [Section 13.48.050](#) explains the stormwater utility fee.

SOLID WASTE (or garbage)

Solid waste fees, for those residents that reside in the Ace Disposal pick-up area, are also set by ordinance. [Section 7.04.030](#) outlines the rates, which increase annually on July 1. Currently, customers pay a \$10.50 base fee for garbage and \$10.50 for recycling each month. Adding an extra container costs \$9.75 per month.

POWER

There have not been any power rate increases since 2011, so an increased charge for power is strictly due to consumption.

If you have a question about your bill and how charges were calculated, please contact utility billing customer service at 801-264-2626.