

Water, sewer and recycling rates headed up in Warrenton

Hikes to cover maintenance and operations costs

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Warrenton plans to increase water, sewer and recycling rates in the new fiscal year, explaining that the increases are necessary to fund regular maintenance and operations costs and related projects into the future.

Overall, the increases will add approximately \$5.68 to the base rate of a city customer's bill starting in July, or roughly \$1.83 to water, \$2.64 to sewer, 53 cents to storm sewer and 16 cents to recycling costs, according to April Clark, the city's finance director.

The City Commission held a first reading of the proposed

resolution Tuesday night. A second reading and approval of the resolution will occur at the commission's next meeting June 27. This gives residents a chance to share their thoughts and opinions on the increases, said City Manager Linda Engbretson.

The city's budget committee proposed a 7 percent increase to water rates, which is expected to raise about \$182,000 in the water fund by the end of the fiscal year in June 2018. Sewer rates are going up by 5 percent, a move that is expected to raise around \$102,200 in the sewer fund over the fiscal year.

The city's water system is large and provides water not only to Warrenton residents but also to Surf Pines, Clatsop Plains and Cullaby Lake as well as some water to Gearhart. Bills will vary from customer to customer based on usage. Customers outside the city's

limits already pay a slightly higher base fee.

The city increased water and sewer rates in 2015 and again this fiscal year. City Commissioner Rick Newton said it's important to recognize that the commission is "playing catch-up." The city had long tried to avoid unpopular rate hikes, despite being advised over the years to increase the rates. Another study completed last year repeated this advice.

On Tuesday, the commission voted to unanimously approve increased rates at the Warrenton Community Center located downtown next to the city park.

Rental rates there have not been increased since July 2014.

At a budget committee meeting in May, the community center's advisory board recommended a 10 percent increase, raising hourly rates for rental of the center's meeting room only,

the meeting room with kitchen access included, and the "all day" rates.

Budget Committee Chairman Paul Mitchell had said he thought the city could go even higher with some of these rates, pointing out what other groups charge for meeting space. But city staff worried about discouraging regular users.

On Tuesday, the commission considered a compromise of sorts: a 12.5 percent increase to the "meeting room with kitchen" rental rate and a 16.7 percent increase for the "meeting room only" rate, with all-day rates adjusted accordingly. The community center's advisory board supported this recommendation.

This resolution takes the "all day" rates up from \$241 and \$359 to \$281 and \$404, depending on whether or not a group plans to use the kitchen facilities.

Loopholes delay a 'tobacco-free' campus policy

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop Community College Board voted unanimously Tuesday to send a proposed tobacco-free policy back to the drawing board because of loopholes allowing people to smoke in cars and on the fringes of campus.

The policy stated that all college properties would be tobacco-free by the start of the fall academic term. But the policy would have allowed smoking in private vehicles on campus and in designated "good neighbor zones" around the exterior

of college properties.

Board Member Tessa Scheller said the loopholes made the proposal dead on arrival from her perspective.

"This is the No. 1 killer," Scheller said of tobacco, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. "There's no reason to facilitate smoking that I can see."

College President Christopher Breitmeyer said the policy was developed while keeping the impact of previous efforts in mind and that such good neighbor zones were common at other tobacco-free campuses.

College projects enrollment increase

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop Community College Board on Tuesday adopted a nearly \$11.6 million operating budget for the coming school year.

"We are very pleased to present a proposed budget which includes investment in academic, student services and operations due to the improving fiscal outlook and efforts made by all faculty and staff working to increase student enrollment," JoAnn Zahn, the college's vice president of finance and operations, said in her budget message.

The college projects an 8 percent increase in enrollment, from an estimated equivalent of 1,290 students this year to 1,393 next year. The increase

is expected from expanded welding, English as a Second Language and maritime science programs, for which the college has increased staffing, along with additional activities in the redeveloped Patriot Hall.

Tuition and fee revenue, which represents about one-third of the college's operating resources, is projected at \$3.5 million in the coming year. Property taxes are projected at \$4.5 million.

The third leg of the college's funding scheme is predicated on the state Legislature giving community colleges \$550 million in the 2017-19 biennium, of which the college would receive 0.88 percent, or \$2.3 million. The college also projects \$450,000 in timber tax revenue above what is earmarked to pay off debt.

Lawmakers advance health care provider tax

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Legislature's budget-writing committee on Tuesday advanced a bill over Republican objections that would increase the state's tax on health care providers to cover the costs of expanding Medicaid.

The Joint Committee on Ways and Means also advanced Tuesday a \$19.9 billion budget for the Oregon Health Authority for the next two years, including \$2.2 billion from the state's general fund.

Both bills now go to the floor of the state House of Representatives.

The increased tax would raise revenue from hospitals, insurers and coordinated care organizations — the regional networks of providers serving patients on the Oregon Health Plan, Oregon's version of Medicaid — to help cover the costs of the government's health care plan for the poor and other qualifying groups.

The bill is expected to raise \$673 million in the next two years to fund Medicaid and to help fund reinsurance, a reimbursement system that protects insurers from high claims.

Currently, certain urban hospitals are assessed a 5.3 percent provider tax that is set to expire in 2019. The legislation would extend the assessment to 2021 and increase it to 6 percent for those hospitals, and establish a new 4 percent tax on net revenues of rural hospitals.

Some Republicans criticized the proposal, contending the costs of care were likely to be shifted to consumers.

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A: If you hurt, especially in a joint, use ice; it reduces inflammation and pain and shortens healing time. You can get a burn from ice just like with heat, so don't leave it on for more than 20 minutes. Most problems get better more quickly with ice. Heat feels good, but may seriously make problems worse. As long as there is pain and/or swelling, continue ice; it can be done as often as once an hour. Would you heat a cut? No, because it would keep bleeding—that is what happens inside where you can't see it.

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