

SENECA FALLS WATER DEPARTMENT

81 W. Bayard Street

Seneca Falls, New York 13148

Tel: 315-568-6211
Fax: 315-568-4672

2016 RATE INCREASE NOTIFICATION

December 23, 2015

As we all round into the New Year and assess our basic needs, set goals and plan financially for tomorrow, we take inventory of the year past and look forward to an opportunity to keep what was good and change for the better....

Our community has much more to offer than many communities around us. This benefits us in multiple ways and we need to preserve and continue to invest in our community to maintain that status. We have two major assets, the first being our Water Treatment Plant which provides us not only the ability to produce water for ourselves, but to provide excess to our neighboring towns. The second asset is our Waste Water Treatment Plant, which allows us the ability to accept local discharge, but also the discharge from our neighboring communities. Believe it or not this does help keep our costs down, provides us quality control and aids us in protecting our assets. Seneca Falls has the most modern purification system in our surrounding area, and provides superior water quality at a very comparable competitive cost.

Another asset is our distribution system. Our distribution system, consists of two water towers and approximately 72 miles of underground pipes and valves. Without these we would need to find an alternate water source, which brings us to the necessity for a rate increase to maintain, improve, and protect our infrastructure. There is material in the ground that is over 100 years old and needs to be replaced, and our water towers have been neglected far too long. As we are faced with many of the same issues that the rest of this state and country are facing, Seneca Falls has created an Asset Management Plan to face the issues we are dealing with on a daily basis and in the future, such as replacing miles of old deteriorating pipe.

Seneca Falls has some very steep obstacles to overcome in 2016 and 2017. The most immediate, our water towers. To keep the Auburn Road tower from surpassing the need for minor repairs in 2016 to significant and costly repairs in 2017. The Auburn Road tower needs to have an interior renovation, an active mixing system installed as well as an exterior overcoat and minor exterior repairs. This project is anticipated to cost \$800,000.00 alone.

The VanRennsalaer tower requires more substantial work to save it and allow it to continue to be an asset to our system, and our community. In addition to the same work as the Auburn Rd tower, the VanRennsalaer tower needs an exterior blast to allow for repairs and resurfacing at the tune of approximately \$2,028,000.00. The work for this tower cannot be put off any longer and needs to start in 2017 to save this asset.

Please contemplate these imperative projects and their significance when the new rates go into effect.

Please also consider this; Basic necessities are food and water, shelter and heat. To provide, use, remove and treat approximately 100 gallons of water and sewer from your home a day, it will cost you \$1.54. A single 20 ounce bottle of soda or water from the gas station or vending machine costs \$1.50, or how much does one cup of 12 ounce coffee cost, or how much does that one little Kurig cup of coffee cost for you to make at home. Now think about this, which purchase provides a necessity and which one is an indulgence? And last but not least, which expense actually provides you and every person in your home a basic necessity, at a relatively low cost?

As we all face these increasing costs, we need to keep in mind that without these assets in our community we would face greater hardships than deciding to pass on that bottle of soda or cup of coffee.

New Rates will be gradually implemented, all quarterly customers will convert completely to the new rate for the April, May and June Billing Cycles. The increase on the minimum bill is \$14.25 per quarter, taking the minimum charge for water from \$47.50 to \$61.75 a quarter for 1200 cubic feet/8,976 gallons. The quarterly sewer rate will remain the same at \$76.00 for 1200 cubic feet/8,976 gallons.

All monthly customers will see the new rates in their February bills. The new rate for monthly customers will increase from \$22.50 to \$29.25 with an allowance of 400 cubic feet/2,992 gallons.

The Water Department does offer financial assistance by offering discounts to income qualified Senior Citizens, and Sewer Credits to all who apply prior to filling swimming pools. We also assist homeowners who experience high bills due to an undetected leak, with a onetime leak credit, if qualified and applied for in writing. Please refer to the guidelines for all programs offered on our official website at www.senecafalls.com.

Our website will also contain information about an online payment option when it becomes available and information about advisories, public notices and water conservation tips can also be found on our website, as well as what to look for if you think you have a leak or other plumbing issue.

You can also reach us at the office located at 81 W Bayard Street, or by calling 315-568-6211 between 8:00 and 4:30, or the Town Supervisors Office at 315-568-0940.

The Town of Seneca Falls wishes to express, hope for a Holiday Season full of gratitude, and a New Year that offers opportunity for a better tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Town of Seneca Falls
Water Department