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**Your City Representatives**

**Mayor**

Harvey Crowder

**Council Members**

- Jerry Bobbitt
- Michael Cleveland
- Marge Nyhagen
- Loren Peterson
- Melodie Selby
- Heather Schermann
- Vacant

**City Administrator**

Mike Rizzitiello

625 S. College Ave  
509.529.1200



**Mayor's Message**



Recently there was a complaint on one of the local social media lists about utility rates and the state of the water system in College Place. There was some inaccurate information and some cost comparisons that I believe it's important to shed some light on. Before I do that, I believe you need some background on how our utilities are funded. We have three utilities in College Place: water, sewer, and the recently mandated stormwater utilities. Each of these utilities are self-supporting; that is, the fees that you pay for each of these go toward operation of only that specific utility, including, installation, up-keep, and repair. Each utility also has a capital budget that puts aside monies for major construction and repair projects. The rates you, and the City, pay have been projected to cover the day-to-day operation of the utility and fund projected future needs to maintain, repair, and expand that unique facility. Our tax on utilities goes back into the City's general fund to help pay for work on our streets, fund our public safety (police and fire) departments, and provide additional support for City operations.

What's the status of your utilities? Our water system has some major needs. The City has three wells. In 2016 our 70+ year old Well 1 failed due to a major bend in the well shaft that precluded replacing the pump; it is not functioning. Well 2 is fully functional; however, each time the pump is activated the well head "jumps" which has resulted in the well head raising above the floor of the well house. We use this as a backup well to fill our water tower and the two 750,000-gallon storage tanks located just off Whitman Drive. Well 3 is now our primary well, it is being supported by a well from Irrigation District 14 that also provides water to part of the City. To replace Wells 1 & 2 we've received loans, grants, issued a bond and legislative appropriations amounting to \$6,591,297 from the Washington State Drinking Water Revolving Fund, the State Legislature, and a Water Revenue Bond which will replace both wells (each over 900 feet deep) and fund other capital improvements to the water system. While we started on well replacement in 2016, monies were slow in coming due to a lack of a Capital Construction Budget not being passed in 2017 by the state legislature and administrative delays in the Washington State Department of Health. Those are behind us now and the first well shaft is being started as I pen this tome; the second well will be started as soon as drilling apparatus capable of drilling a 30" shaft is available. In January the City Council declared an emergency to help us minimize future administrative delays. The motor on Well 3 failed in early February and was replaced with a more robust motor; we expect no future problems with that well. We still have more construction needed in the water system to replace 5,000+ feet of old iron water pipes and other system improvements, including new water meters.

Our current wastewater system has major needs as well. Our sewage treatment plant is 18 years old and needs a major upgrade to the plant itself and a major change on how we discharge our treated sewage. Our current projection for that total project ranges up to \$27,000,000. We believe most of those costs will have to be covered by state and federal loans and grants with additional funding from our Wastewater Capital fund. Additionally, we have over 11,871 feet of sewer lines that need replacement or lining in the next six years alone.

The newly state and federally-mandated Stormwater utility currently is under development. The City was required to hire two additional staff and required to purchase several pieces of equipment, primarily a street sweeper and vactor truck, to help keep pollutants out of our streams. Your fees pay for the

## Mayor's message continued

staff, supplies, and equipment for this utility. Any construction for mitigation activities will have to come from loans and grants from various state, federal, and foundation monies.

What about the comparison of the costs compared to our neighbor?

City	Water	Water Usage	Sewer	Sewer Flow	Stormwater	Utility Tax
College Place	\$35.91	\$1.44/1,000 gallons	\$46.02	3,000 gallons free then \$4.33/1,000 gallons	\$9.19 \$9.19/ERU*	11.1%
Walla Walla	¾" meter \$39.40 1" meter \$78.40	\$0.002807/gallon (or \$2.807/1000 gallons)	55.90		\$12.60 \$6.20 for Additional 2, 3, 4 Units All others \$12.60/ERU	13%

ERU=Equivalent Residential Unit. Business and multi-family housing pay a rate that's based upon the amount of impermeable surface compared to a single-family home. The single-family residence coverage is based upon the average amount of impermeable coverage (driveways, sidewalk, roof) of single-family homes.

I hope this helps you understand the current state of our three City utilities and how they are paid for. Questions, please ask [hcrowder@cpwa.us](mailto:hcrowder@cpwa.us), 509.529.1200.



### Community Calendar

**March 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM** - Economic Development, Tourism, and Events Commission

**March 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM** - City Council Workshop

**March 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM** - City Council Meeting

**March 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM** - City Council & Planning Commission Joint Meeting

**March 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 PM** - Historic Preservation Commission

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00 AM** - Park, Arbor & Recreation Board

**March 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM** - Youth Advisory Commission

Unless specified all events are at City Hall— 625 S. College Ave

### College Place Department Contacts

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#### City Administrator

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#### Public Works Director

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#### Community Development Director

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