

Water rate increase approved for Hiawatha customers

(KNZA)--A 20 percent rate increase has been approved for Hiawatha water customers.

The Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening approved an ordinance setting new water rates for 2023.

Interim City Administrator Larry Paine recommended the rate adjustment, which was included in the 2023 budget. In making the recommendation, Paine noted there is a nearly \$149,000 difference in fees paid by customers and the cost of running the utility.

He said about one-third of the city's water customers will only see about a \$4 increase in their monthly bill, with a rate table determining extra charges for usage over 200 cubic feet.

The last rate increase was 7 years ago.

Moving forward, Paine said rate adjustments should be considered on an annual basis instead until waiting until a financial issue is in play, forcing an adjustment. He said that usually results in a significant rate change in one year to “catch up” to the actual expenses.

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