

Bedford Regional Water Authority
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PRESS RELEASE

April 21, 2021
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bedford Regional Water Authority Board Approves New Rate Beginning June 1st

At the April 20 board meeting of the Bedford Regional Water Authority (Authority), the board of directors approved the rates for fiscal year 2021-2022. These rates will go into effect on June 1, 2021, and will be utilized for all billing statements after June 30, 2021.

A public hearing was held during the meeting to allow the public to comment or ask questions about the rates. The rates were previously advertised in March along with them being posted on the Authority's website. No members of the public attended the meeting to speak during the hearing. After the public hearing closed the board approved the rates in a unanimous 7-0 vote.

The average customer using 4,000 gallons of water a month will see a rate increase of approximately \$2.53 for water and \$2.17 for sewer. The modified rates also include a new rate for bulk fill stations of \$12.00 per every 1000 gallons used.

"The conversations that the board, Finance Committee, and staff have had surrounding the budget and rate change have been analytical, thoughtful, and challenging. Balancing the needs of the community with the Authority's ability to continue to provide service with as few interruptions as possible, is always a fine balance to achieve. We believe that instating rate changes this year will allow us to continue to improve our service while not causing a large impact on our customers," said Jill Underwood, Director of Finance for the Authority.

This is year eight in a ten-year equalization process that gradually combines the former Bedford County Public Service Authority and the former City of Bedford Water and Sewer department rates. The rates are based on a [rate study](#) conducted by Draper Aden Associates in preparation for consolidation and the creation of the Bedford Regional Water Authority in 2013.

Last year, due to the pandemic and the sudden changes it caused within the community, the Authority board chose to hold off on any rate changes to help support its customers through the unexpected strain that COVID-19 caused for households. The Authority also offered financial support to those affected by COVID-19 with CARES funding administered through partnering organizations and stopping disconnections due to late payments.

After carefully examining customer trends and the amount of late or no payments throughout the past year, the board decided to continue with the rate equalization in 2021. This will allow rates to gradually equalize while avoiding a dramatic rate change in the future.

The Authority board recognizes that the pandemic is still affecting some customers within the community. To help those in need of financial assistance, the Authority is offering payment plan options for qualifying customers. Customers in need of support may create an agreement and enroll in a payment plan in coordination with the Authority's Customer Service department. Other organizations such as the Agape Center, Bedford Christian Ministries, Interfaith Outreach Action Group, Lake Christian Ministries, Lynchburg Community Action Group, and the Salvation Army are offering utility bill assistance as well.

The Authority's goal with rate equalization is to continue providing quality service to its customer base. This includes system upgrades to minimize the number of line breaks and service disruptions due to aging water and sewer lines.

About the Bedford Regional Water Authority:

The Bedford Regional Water Authority (BRWA) provides water and wastewater services to the residents and businesses in Bedford County and the Town of Bedford; additionally, the BRWA partners with the Western Virginia Water Authority to serve customers surrounding Smith Mountain Lake in both Bedford and Franklin County. Visit www.brwa.com for further information.

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