



**Office of the City Manager**  
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# Memo

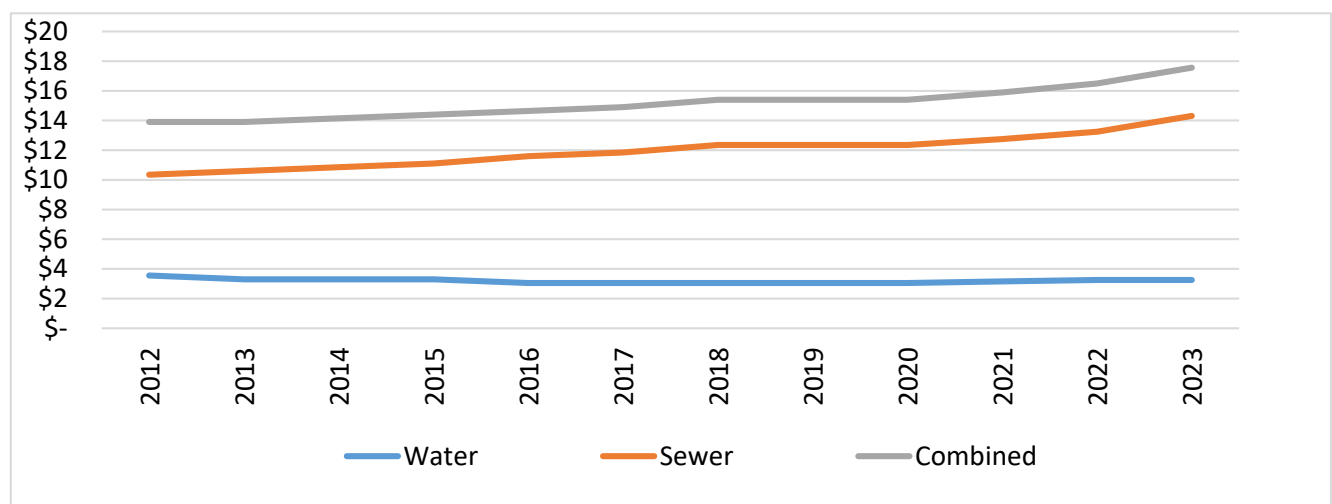
**To:** Members of Dublin City Council  
**From:** Megan O'Callaghan, City Manager  
**Date:** November 1, 2022  
**Initiated By:** Matthew L. Stiffler, Director of Finance  
**Re:** Ordinance 64-22 Amending Chapter 51 Establishing User Fees and Capacity Charges for the Sanitary Sewer

## Summary

A financial review of the City's Water and Sewer Funds was completed as part of the annual update of the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The review included financial projections through 2027 for operating revenue and costs, capital improvement projects, and existing and projected debt service obligations. Consistent with discussions during the CIP, it was determined that a water rate increase is not necessary at this time, however an 8% increase to sewer user fees would be recommended to support the fund's obligations in future years. This includes the construction of three relief sewers planned in the next five-year period: Deer Run Sanitary Sewer System Improvements – Riverview Street Relief Sewer; Avery Road Relief Sewer, and Glick Road Relief Sewer. Currently, the combined total of those projects (programmed over the next five-year CIP period) is \$8.285 million.

Ordinance No. 64-22 increases sanitary sewer fees by the recommended amounts for 2023. Funds will be monitored, and future fee increases will be brought forward to City Council on an annual basis.

The following table displays water and sewer rates since 2012.



Implementation of the recommended user fees for the Columbus Service Area will result in the following rates per 1,000 cubic feet:

	<b>Water *</b>	<b>Sewer *</b>	<b>Total</b>
Current rate – 2022	\$3.25	\$13.25	\$16.50
2023 change	\$0.0 (0%)	\$1.06 (8%)	\$1.06
New rate – 2023	\$3.25	\$14.31	\$17.56

\* These rates are in addition to rates charged by the City of Columbus.

Based on the average Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) of 1,100 cubic feet of water usage per month, the average **quarterly** Dublin surcharge costs are estimated as follows:

	<b><u>Water</u></b>	<b><u>Sewer</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Current rate – 2022	\$10.66	\$43.73	\$54.39
2023 change	\$0.0 (0%)	\$3.50 (8%)	\$3.50
New rate – 2023	\$10.66	\$47.23	\$57.89

The recommended water and sanitary sewer system user fee adjustments also apply to the area that is served by Delaware County (Wedgewood Hills, Campden Lakes, and Wedgewood Glen). Delaware County charges a flat rate user charge and the monthly Dublin user charge reflected in the ordinance is based on an ERU of 1,100 cubic feet of water usage per month and the user fee rates per MCF.

	<b><u>Sewer – Monthly *</u></b>	<b><u>Sewer – Quarterly *</u></b>
Current rate – 2022	\$14.60	\$43.80
2023 change	\$1.17 (8%)	\$3.50 (8%)
New rate – 2023	\$15.77	\$47.30

\* These rates are in addition to rates charged by Delaware County.

The rate structures for both the water and sanitary sewer systems will continue to be reviewed as part of the annual CIP process. Based on the need to continually maintain the sanitary sewer lines and potential service expansions, future user fees and capacity charges will continue to be evaluated to determine the need to adjust rates in the future.

### Sewer Fund

The Sewer Fund currently has debt outstanding for multiple projects in the total principal amount of \$17.5 million. Long-term bonds are currently planned for issuance in the total amount of approximately \$20.43 million over the next five-year period in conjunction with the approved 2023-2027 Capital Improvements Program.

The proposed debt service for capital projects associated with the sanitary sewer system is much more intense than that of the water system over the next five years. It is currently anticipated that \$1.2 million in sanitary manhole rehabilitation will be expended over the next five-year period, with sanitary sewer lining and repair costing approximately \$3 million in that same time period. Additionally, improvements such as those necessary for the Deer Run Relief Sewers will incur costs of more than \$8.285 million. The proposed increase in fees is a direct result of the programmed increase in expenditures associated with the debt service costs outlined above

Low Income Water and Sewer Discount Programs

The City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities offers a 20% discount on water and sewer consumption charges for qualifying low-income customers. Income requirements are based on federal poverty standards.

The attached documents provide program details and the application for the low-income program that must be completed by a customer seeking assistance. Additional information regarding this program can be found at the following link:

<https://www.columbus.gov/utilities/customers/Utility-Discount-Programs/>

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of Ordinance No. 64-22 at the second reading/public hearing on November 14, 2022.

RECORD OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 64-22
Passed
, 20

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 51  
ESTABLISHING USER FEES AND CAPACITY CHARGES  
FOR THE SANITARY SEWER

WHEREAS, a financial analysis of the City’s Water and Sewer Funds is conducted annually as part of the Capital Improvements Program update; and

WHEREAS, the financial analysis is completed to evaluate the water and sewer system rate structure and projected fund balance in the Water and Sewer Funds; and

WHEREAS, the City’s goal is to maintain water and sewer rate structures which are adequate to insure the Water and Sewer Funds (Enterprise Funds) are self-supporting, including the costs of operations, maintenance of the systems, debt service obligations and necessary capital replacements; and

WHEREAS, based on the financial analysis completed as part of the 2023 – 2027 Capital Improvements Program update, it is necessary to amend the fees for the sanitary sewer user fees and capacity charges.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Dublin, State of Ohio,
members of the elected officials concurring:

Section 1.

Section 51.64 of the Codified Ordinances to be amended to read as follows:

(A) The following rate is the charge for sewer service and use and is based on metered consumption of water for the area of the City served by the City of Columbus:

Rate Per 1,000 Cubic Feet

Effective Date

January 1, 2023 \$14.31

(B) These rates above are in addition to the sewer rates charged by the City of Columbus.

(C) The following rate is the charge for sewer service and use for the area of the City serviced by Delaware County:

Flat Rate Per Month

Effective Date

January 1, 2023 \$15.77

(D) The rate above is in addition to the sewer rates charged by the Delaware County.

(E) Fees received from use of the sewer system shall be deposited in the Sewer Fund and used for the operation and maintenance of the system, including capital improvements and any related debt service.

Section 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance adopting the schedule of fees and service charges shall take effect on January 1, 2023.

Passed this
day of
, 2022

Mayor - Presiding Officer

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

## Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the discount, applicants must have an active City of Columbus water or sewer account for their residence in their name (or spouse's name) and meet at least one of the following requirements:

1) Household income must be less than 150% of the current U.S. Bureau of Census federal poverty level. You must provide proof of current household income with the following for all household members over 18:

- Income tax return
- W-2 forms
- Benefit letter from Social Security
- Pension award statement

-OR-

2) Applicant must be currently enrolled in a qualifying low income program. A current letter of participation from one of the following programs is required:

- Food stamp benefits
- Ohio Medicaid
- Low Income Energy Assistance
- Home Energy Assistance (HEAP)
- Ohio Works First
- Public housing benefits

Household Size	2022 Maximum Income
1	\$21,146
2	\$28,016
3	\$32,747
4	\$41,363
5	\$47,765
6	\$53,294
7	\$58,437
8	\$66,311
9 or more	\$78,579

*The federal poverty level may be adjusted annually.  
Call or check out website for current requirements.*

## General Information

1) Customers approved for the program will receive a 20% discount on water and sewer usage charges.

2) Discount will not include: meter reading, late charges, interest or other associated fees.

3) Eligibility must be established annually. To maintain eligibility, customer must sign a new application on or before the date of the previous year's application.

4) If customer becomes ineligible for the discount, Customer Service must be notified as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the ineligibility.

5) Falsifying information or failing to notify a change in eligibility status may lead to:

- Termination of water service
- Recovery of past discounts
- Civil and/or criminal sanctions

6) For questions, please contact Customer Service at 614-645-8276 Monday - Friday 7AM - 6PM, email [UtilityLead-Rep@columbus.gov](mailto:UtilityLead-Rep@columbus.gov) or visit [columbus.gov/utilities/](http://columbus.gov/utilities/).

2022



# Low Income Water and Sewer Discount Program

A 20% discount is available on water and sewer consumption charges for qualifying low-income customers. Income requirements are based on federal poverty standards; please see details inside.

To apply, please complete and return the enclosed application with the proper documentation, or apply online at [columbus.gov/payassist/](http://columbus.gov/payassist/).

THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC UTILITIES



## 2022 WATER AND SEWER DISCOUNT APPLICATION

Name:

Last First Middle

Address:

Number Street / Road Apartment #

Phone:

City State Zip Code

Email Address:

Number of people in household: \_\_\_\_\_

Account number (from water bill): \_\_\_\_\_

To be eligible for the low income discount program, applicants must have an active City of Columbus water or sewer account for their residence in their name (or spouse's name) and must meet at least one of the following requirements:

1. You must have a total income of less than 150% of the U.S. Bureau of Census poverty level (see income levels on opposite side). You must provide current proof of household income with the following for all household members over 18 (must be dated and include name):
  - Income Tax Return
  - W-2 Forms
  - Benefit Letter from Social Security
  - Pension Award Statement or
2. You must be currently enrolled in a qualifying low income program and provide current letter of participation from one of the following programs (must be dated and include name):
  - Food Stamp Benefits
  - Ohio Medicaid
  - Low Income Energy Assistant (LIHEAP)
  - Home Energy Assistance (HEAP)
  - Ohio Works First
  - Public Housing Benefits

Please send copies only of the above and this application to: (copies will not be returned)

Columbus Department of Public Utilities  
Customer Service Center  
910 Dublin Road  
Columbus OH 43215

Or apply online at [columbus.gov/payassist/](https://columbus.gov/payassist/)

The information associated with this application has been examined by me, and is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, correct and complete.

Applicant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by signature (if different from applicant): \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU 60 OR OLDER? If yes, you may qualify for an additional Senior Discount so please also apply for it. For questions, please contact Customer Service Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at 614-645-8276, email [UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov](mailto:UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov) or visit [www.columbus.gov/utilities/](http://www.columbus.gov/utilities/).