

**PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN OF PLEVNA — Monday, Aug 29, 2022, 7:00 p.m.**

**Plevna Community Center**

Mayor Thielen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilmen present were James Franson, Alba Higgins, Michelle Hillard

Also present: Jolene Boespflug, Clerk/Treasurer

Members of the public present: Wayne and Mary Mangold, Lisa Rieger, Gina Carroll, Shawn and Corrine Sander, Lois Geving, Scot and Nikki Buerkle, Nate Nemitz, Rick Brown and Nicholas Viola

**Public Comment:**

Rick Brown wanted to know why the proposed water increase was \$15

Response: Back in 2019 when the proposed rate increase was accepted the proposal was never adhered to. The proposal was set to increase gradually over 3 years and the increase only took place in year 1 so we are now playing catch up. We need to increase the rates to qualify for grants.

Scot Buerkle inquired why the garbage rate increases were not consistent. The residential rate is proposed to increase 25% but the tiers and rural rates only increase \$5.

Jolene said she just did a \$5 increase across the board and did not factor in that it should have been the same value increase across the board. Scot then inquired why does there need to be an increase in the garbage. Councilman Higgins informed the public that G&G is raising their rates. Scot then suggested to increase the same rate across the board for garbage. Everyone was agreed that the increase should be the same across the board.

Rick then inquired again why the water was going up \$15.

Mayor Thielen informed Rick that the cost of water testing has more than doubled and the chemical costs have also increased. Councilman Higgins referred back to the Town not following the increases proposed in Resolution 165 and now it's harder to get grant money since we did not follow through. The Town has to raise the rates in order to be eligible for grants. Lisa Rieger checked base rates in other towns and wondered why Plevna would be so high. She was informed that the number of people using the system factors into the base rate.

Wayne Mangold asked about the sewer problem.

Councilman Higgins informed him about the state inspection and the town getting a PER to bring the lagoon up to code.

Scot Buerkle asked if the Town looked into other garbage options such as small dumpsters and G&G doing pickup.

He was informed it would be on the resident to pay G&G and not the Town.

Mayor Thielen asked about doing a % increase for the garbage instead of a flat rate increase. It was decided that the garbage increase should be the same across the board to make it fair for everybody. Residents, Tier 1, 2, 3, and rural will all increase 25%.

Nate Nemitz asked if we had a number we were shooting for with the increase.

With the water and sewer rate increases the town had Montana Rural Water come to Plevna and look at our system. Based on the number of users and pipe size the recommended increase is what the town is going with. Montana Rural Water also suggested to do a flat rate on the sewer. The flat rate is for the sewer only, the water rate is still based on water usage.

Rick asked if there would be another increase in 6 months.

The town will put a proactive plan in place that would entail small yearly increases instead of doing a large increase periodically.


Lisa inquired if the town could off set the water increase since the sewer is taking a big increase.

Mayor Thielen mentioned maybe we could do a 35% increase which would be \$47.25 instead of raising it to \$50. Any additional water would remain at \$4.50/1000 gallons. Councilman Higgins stated the sewer should remain at a flat rate increase. The base rate was calculated and it would be a 25% garbage increase(residential \$25, Tier 1 \$37.50, Tier 2 \$75, Tier 3 112.50 and Rural \$300), \$45 flat rate sewer rate increase, and 35% water (\$47.25) increase which put the flat rate at \$117.25. Everyone was in agreement that the rates should be set as mentioned above.

- **Mayor/Council Comments**

After hearing all public comment, Mayor Thielen adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Plevna Town Council will be Monday, September 12, 2022, at the Plevna Community Center.

  
Town Clerk, Jolene Boespflug

  
Mayor, Gary Thielen