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Rossville hikes minimum water rates for arsenic removal

ROSSVILLE—A mandated plan to remove more arsenic from the village water supply is going to result in nearly doubled water rates for residents.

At Monday night's meeting, the village board unanimously approved raising rates for minimum water usage from \$7 to \$13 per month.

Minimum usage is up to 2,000 gallons.

Trustees also approved raising the minimum sewer rate by \$6, from \$2.60 currently to \$8.60 monthly.

Money generated by the water increase will be banked towards an upgrade at the water treatment plant, estimated to cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000.

The upgrade is mandated by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and stems from legislation passed by former President Bill Clinton, lowering arsenic levels in municipal water systems. Village officials have stressed that arsenic levels currently in the water supply do not pose a health threat to residents.

The village plans to spend \$2,500 to have a grant writer submit a proposal to the state that would help fund changes at the treatment plant. Grants must be filed by February; a decision is expected about May.

A previous grant application for which the village paid nothing was rejected, said Mayor Terry Prillaman.

If the grant, with a maximum of \$400,000 is awarded, the village could reduce water rates, Prillaman said after the meeting.

The village will also have to pay \$45,000 to \$50,000 for a design for the treatment system.

Trustee Mark Catron wondered whether the increase would be enough to pay for the project, keep up with repairs and provide a cushion in the water fund. "I don't think we're getting out and projecting ahead," he said, adding that a higher increase might be warranted to eliminate having to raise rates again in the near future.

Bunny Tweedy, water/sewer committee chairman,

said the committee and Prillaman ran the numbers. "There's never a guarantee," she said. "We think it's enough."

Trustee Vic Lackey said that in order to qualify for the grant, the village must show that it is trying to help itself by raising rates to pay for necessary changes. "It's up to our generation to pay for better water for the future," he said. Also, he said, several years of inflation have not been passed on to water customers which will be rectified with the increase.

On the plus side, a survey of water rates in the surrounding area show that even with the increase, Rossville will still be on the low end of the scale, Tweedy said.

And, Prillaman added, iron and arsenic bond so by removing more arsenic, the village's problem with rusty water should also be improved.

The increase is expected to be placed on September usage payable in October.

In unrelated discussion, an incident last week has trustees once again addressing the issue of dangerous dogs.

Last Monday, an unidentified woman was feeding pit bulls when the dogs allegedly threatened her. The dogs are owned by the woman's boyfriend, officials said.

During the incident, local police officers were unavailable and the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department refused to respond to what they considered a dog call, Prillaman said. "It wasn't a dog problem," he added. "It was a woman in fear for her life."

Street and alley superintendent Randy Lusk answered the call, armed with a shovel. After trustees discussed the dangers to Lusk, he responded with "that's what we're here for." On the dangerous animal issue, "we're a long way from having that situation worked out to everyone's satisfaction," he said.

See ROSSVILLE on other side

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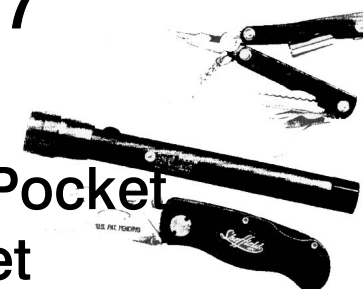
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Frances Long honored during United Methodist Women Sunday at Methodist Church

Women and their work within the church were honored at United Methodist Women Sunday at Hoopeston United Methodist Church.

Frances Long was presented with a United Methodist Women Special Mission recognition certificate and pin. The Rev. Janet Eggleston presented Long with the award.

Long has rendered many hours of volunteer service to the church and community in many capacities including United Methodist Women secretary, messenger for the Tape Ministry Program, Work Area member, contributor to the bazaar success, calling on shut-ins, attendance at Sunday worship service, and in other ways. Long has faithfully served her church and those in need.

Rossville continued from other side

Trustees took no action on a suggestion by Prillaman that officials limit the number of dogs and cats per household. Instead, they seemed more in favor of ordinance changes governing animal breeding.

Tweedy asked whether the village attorney could enact ordinances covering necessary space and fencing needed for those who breed dogs.

The dogs in question, estimated at three females, one male and 10 pups, had no proof of rabies shots and no village tags although the owner had been told to provide proof.

"They didn't have tags, they didn't have shots," Catron said. "Why aren't they gone?"

"I propose we put something together that's got some teeth," Prillaman said.

In other business, trustees:

- Learned a developer wants all property in the Ridl and Thomas subdivisions. Whether the 18 lots will be sold in one unit should be approved by December.
- Approved a request from The Freeway youth facility to solicit funds from 8 a.m.-noon Saturday, Oct. 7.
- Took no action on a request from Trustee Dick Queen that the village and Rossville Community Organization split the cost of having pavers put in by the new Casey's General Store.
- Catron said it was unfair to spend thousands of dollars on the project when new sidewalks are also needed on the other side of the street.

A new ministry was initiated within the Hoopeston United Methodist Women this year. Prayer shawls are being made by several UMW members. The knitted and crocheted shawls which will be given to shut-ins, elder members, those suffering from loss of a loved one or going through a difficult time, during bereavement, illness or recovery - the possibilities are endless.

Many blessings are prayed into every shawl. Rev. Eggleston blessed all 14 shawls during worship service.

Many UMW assisted in Sunday's worship service in various capacities: Carol Boose offered the sermon/message, Sue Anvick served as liturgist and Marilyn Unger and Betty Richards read the Scriptures. Several other women served in other areas during the service.



Photo contributed

Frances Long, right receives a Special Mission recognition certificate and pin from the Rev. Janet Eggleston during United Methodist Women Sunday at the Hoopeston United Methodist Church.

• Queen said the RCO is discussing a can recycling program, proceeds to go to replacing those sidewalks.

• Learned gas contracts with companies other than the Missouri Gas Commission will be considered. The village is locked in for a year with the commission, Prillaman said. "I'm afraid we're going to be locked into prices that are rather high," he said.

Police News



No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 2:25 p.m. Monday at Rt. 1 and West Main. Police said Claudette Stone of Bloomington, Ind., in a 2005 Mack semi, was turning east on Main when she struck a 2002 Pontiac driven by Alice Cowan of Danville.

Fire Calls



Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 6:18 p.m. to a transformer on fire in the alley behind Anderson Funeral Home, 427 E. Main. Police also responded.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 62. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 39. Tomorrow, partly cloudy, chance of thunderstorms late. High 67, low 55.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

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