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Elkins Gets Results Of Water, Sewer Impact Fee Study

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ELKINS - An impact fee for water and sewer for a single-family home would cost \$7,200 if both Elkins and Fayetteville approve the maximum fees, according to a recently complete study.

Elkins contracts with Fayetteville for water and sewer service, so Fayetteville's actions impact Elkins customers.

Consultant Steve Davis showed the Elkins City Council the results of an Infrastructure Funding and Impact Fee Report Review during Thursday night's council meeting.

The study, which covers the cities of Fayetteville, Elkins, Farmington and Greenland, looks at ways to pay for increased maintenance and capacity as the area grows.

Farmington and Greenland also receive water and sewer service from Fayetteville.

Davis admitted Fayetteville is not likely to pass the entire proposed assessment in one fell swoop.

"It's going to be difficult for Fayetteville to adopt the maximum because they don't want to kill the potential growth that's out there," Davis said.

Under the study's findings, Fayetteville's combined water and sewer impact fees would jump from its current price of \$1,143 to \$5,500.

But if the maximum is approved in all four cities, the impact fees will raise \$75 million over a 10-year period.

In Elkins alone, it would generate income of \$300,000 for water and \$700,000 for sewer.

"It may not be this year or the next or the next, but sooner or later, these numbers are going to come into play," Davis said.

The numbers are near the national average for impact fees, Davis said. Nationally, impact fees average \$3,200 for water and \$2,900 for sewer.

In 2006, Elkins conducted an assessment showing water and sewer needs totaling \$11.6 million in improvement. Last year, Elkins officials narrowed the scope of improvement, limiting the study to the years of 2007 to 2011 based on growth. That study cited needs totaling \$2.9 million.

Davis suggested the council set a joint meeting with the Water and Sewer Commission to iron out details and look at setting realistic impact fees.

"It's coming," said Alderman Bobby McGarrah. "Sooner or later, we're going to have to do this. I'd rather have as many in the study group as we can get."

The council set no time for the joint session at Thursday's meeting.