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Impact fees will pay for sewer growth

Andy Schatschneider, Correspondent

September 13, 2007

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The village will charge new homes and businesses nearly \$4,000 to hook up to municipal sewer, covering the cost of upgrading the system and shielding existing taxpayers from shouldering the cost of new development.

The Village Board agreed Monday to implement an impact fee of \$3,779 on new homes and businesses connecting to village sewer service.

Ruekert/Mielke financial analyst Jon Cameron said the impact fee would go toward the \$6.8 million first-phase expansion and upgrade to the wastewater treatment facility proposed to begin next year. "It will be a one-time fee charged to new developments to cover the capital costs for the improvements at the facility," he said.

Cameron said about 44 percent of the total capital costs for the first phase are for remedying existing deficiencies at the wastewater treatment plant and will be recovered through the village's existing sewer-rate structure.

The remaining 56 percent, about \$3.8 million of capital costs, are attributable to serving new development in the village and can be recovered with impact fees, he said.

Cameron said the plan keeps current residents from subsidizing new developments in the village. "This way growth pays for growth," he said.

Earlier this year, the Village Board adopted an amendment to the wastewater treatment facility plan that outlined the need for expansion and upgrades to the

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current facility and estimated the capital costs for the construction. The plan, Cameron said, served as the basis for the facility's needs assessment

A proposed approximately \$4.5 million second phase, planned to begin in 2017, would include a further expansion and improvements to the facility in preparation for the projected increase in population within the village's sewer planning areas. This second phase, he said, would be completed as additional growth moves into the village.

The village currently imposes a sewer connection fee of \$2,100 on all new connections to the sanitary sewer system. This fee, Cameron said, has been used to recover the capital costs of providing excess capacity at the facility from the last upgrade in 1981. At that time, he said, it was not possible to adopt a sewer impact fee since the type of fee was not created until 1993.

In May, the Village Board approved a 34-percent increase in the sewer-user rate for residents, in preparation for the needed updates and current maintenance costs at the facility, which has been running near full capacity. A couple more increases to the user rate to be spread out over the next three years was discussed at that time.

A public hearing on the impact fee implementation is projected to be held in the next couple of months. The wastewater treatment facility needs assessment will be available for public review at the Village Hall, 118 S. Main St., in the next few days.

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