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Athens raises water, sewer rates, impact fees

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Citizens of Athens, your water and sewer bills are going up after the Athens City Council approved increases at Monday's meeting.

John Stockton, manager of the Athens Water and Wastewater Department, said the actual increased cost for combined water and sewage service for the average residential customer will be \$2.87 a month. The average customer uses about 6,000 gallons of water a month and produces about 5,400 gallons of sewage a month.

"No one likes rate increases, but inflation is real, and the cost of operating our systems and providing a high level of customer service continues to rise," Stockton said.

Stockton said this is only Athens' second increase since 1992. He said the closure of Sweet Sue represented a loss of 6 percent of his department's sales revenue. The department also needs the additional funding to keep up with federal and state requirements.

The council also approved increases in water and sewer impact fees that developers pay when hooking on a new customer. Stockton estimated this will bring in about \$346,000 a year.

He said the department plans to use this money in a capital infrastructure fund for financing major sewer and water systems

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