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Bellevue commission to debate water fees **One-time costs would be paid by new construction.**

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THE STAR-BANNER

BELLEVUE - At their next scheduled meeting slated for June, Bellevue city commissioners will decide whether to raise water impact fees and install new animal-control rates and penalties.

Public Works Director Dennis Monroe said the proposed cost for water impact and water connection fees will be paid by new construction, and not by existing residents. It will be a one-time fee.

If approved by the five-member City Commission - including the mayor - the water impact fee inside the city limits would go from \$227.70 to \$514.80. The figure is based on a formula that raises rates from 69 cents per gallon to \$1.56, and that number is multiplied by 330, which is what the average home uses each day, Monroe said. Outside the city, it would be a rate of \$1.95, compared with the present rate of 87 cents per gallon.

For water connection fees inside the city for a developer, a one-inch pipe would go from \$205 to \$289.43. And outside the city limits, the same one-inch pipe for developers is expected to go from \$307.50 to \$396.65.

"I think it will pass. Instead of the local people paying for the fees, the new people will," said Mayor Tammy Moore.

As for late fees and service restoration charges, there's only one change - if a customer's payment is received after the 25th of the month and his service is not shut off, he will pay \$10. Before, Commissioner Ken Nadeau said there were disconnecting and reconnecting fees that totaled about \$50.

City officials said the proposed new rates would assist them with the rising costs of materials, fuel and the hiring of more staff.

Monroe said the fees were agreed upon after hiring consultants several years ago to look at the system.

City officials have looked at and received funds from the state's revolving loan and a grant from the St. John's Water Management District to pay for improvements. They also were notified, though it is not yet official, that the state has granted the city \$1 million for the expansion of their wastewater treatment facility.

"We are exploring ways to pay for it other than raising fees," Monroe said.

As for the recent passage of the dog ordinance, the city has identified 28 infractions that could result in fines or a court date.

For example, if a pet owner fails to restrain his animal on his property, he can be fined \$100. A second offense would cost \$200, and a third violation results in a mandatory court appearance.

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