



Council to amend meter tap impact fees

By Karen Middleton

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— The Athens City Council Monday amended an ordinance on meter tap impact fees after a group of property owners objected to being charged impact fees for reconnecting a meter.

Water/Wastewater Department Manager John Stockton said that when the council approved the measure a year ago, it did not realize the effect on owners of rental properties, who must reconnect service .

According to John Stockton, the problem begins with an ordinance that was enacted 20 years ago that says if a water meter does not stay on continuously for 12 months at a home or business, the service will be terminated.

When that happens, Stockton said usually the meter is removed. In order to get service restarted, the owner must pay a tab fee and an impact fee, which must be paid when the meter is set. Those fees run \$880.45.

“We enacted an impact fee on all new meters and it produced unintended consequences,” said Stockton. “It said that if a meter is set, it shall be paid.”

However, Stockton said the purpose of impact fees is for new construction—not reconnecting old service or adding meters to existing connections.

“In our wastewater ordinance we very expressly excluded redevelopment of property, unless it required an upgrade to the system,” said Stockton. He said that the city has agreed to change the language in the water meter impact fee ordinance to make it consistent with the wastewater ordinance.

Also, the council also voted to refund the impact fees to all of those who were charged for reconnection of service.

Other business

In other business Monday, the council approved these agenda items:

- Approved updated zoning ordinance.
- Approval of Water and Sewer revenue in the amount of \$10 million through the State Revolving Loan Fund for the construction of a new sewage treatment plant. The city will vote on an additional \$10 million to \$15 million in 2008.
- Horse-drawn carriage service for Jeff Markham.
- Purchase of a fire truck, six Automatic External Defibrillators, and a test bench for Athens Fire and Rescue
- Adoption of a revised job description for a relief dispatcher/parking enforcement officer while deleting jail duties.
- Purchase of a electronic fingerprint system for the Police Department to eliminate ink and cards at a cost of \$21,713 from Crossmatch Technologies.
- Upgrade of dispatch radio console for the Police Department at a cost of \$29,701 from Decatur Electronic Communications.
- Public hearing of a rezoning request by Billy Cannon and Dick Chittam for property at 2030 U.S. 72 West for the construction of a strip mall.
- Approval of purchasing/procurement policies for Community Development Block Grant projects.
- Approval of Diesel and Lola for a “retail table wine for on and off-premises consumption” alcohol license.

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