City to collect franchise fee for parks and trails replacement projects

Beginning in January 2022, the City of Woodbury will collect a franchise fee on gas and electric utilities to help fund future parks and trail facility replacements.

The estimated franchise fee impact to Woodbury property owners will be $5 per month (total for gas and electric) for most residential properties. The franchise fee for larger commercial properties will be more, with many variables influencing the final estimate for non-residential properties.

The city’s extensive parks and trails system – which includes park buildings and structures, courts, fields, playgrounds, irrigation systems, parking lots, trails, and other miscellaneous items – is maturing and the city needs a long-term funding tool to ensure proper replacement of the amenities for years to come.

The Woodbury Audit and Investment Commission and Woodbury Parks and Natural Resources Commission worked together throughout 2020 to analyze franchise fees and other funding options and develop recommendations for community input and City Council consideration.

Their final recommendations report – and more information about this program – are available at woodburymn.gov/parksfunding.

Multiple funding options were under consideration as detailed in the recommendations report. The City Council opted to move ahead with Option 1A, which uses a combination of the property tax and franchise fee to allocate approximately $2.9 million annually to address the parks and trails replacement funding shortfall.

What is a franchise fee?

Utility franchise fees are commonly found across Minnesota and the country as a way to fund city operations. Under Minnesota Statute (216B.36), cities can impose a fee on utility companies that use the public rights-of-way to deliver service. These utilities then pass on these charges to utility customers on monthly bills. As fees are collected through monthly customer bills, utilities then return the fees collected back to the city.

Public process

Information about this proposal was published in the April/May 2021 City Update newsletter, posted on the city’s website, and dispersed through the city’s InTouch email notification system, YouTube channel and social media accounts. In addition, the city has held 15 public meetings about the franchise fee since November 2019, plus four additional virtual meetings for residents, businesses and other non-taxable properties.

Questions about the parks and trails replacement and funding plan should be directed to Parks and Recreation at 651-714-3583 or reconline@woodburymn.gov.

City purchases land for long-term water treatment facility

In late August, the City of Woodbury purchased a parcel of land south of Hargis Parkway and east of Radio Drive for future construction of a permanent water treatment facility.

The facility is needed to treat the city’s water for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The 3M Company made PFAS at its Cottage Grove facility from the late 1940s until 2002. PFAS wastes were disposed of at multiple sites in Washington County. The source of the PFAS in Woodbury’s groundwater has been identified as these disposal sites.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has established health standards for specific PFAS parameters and has issued health risk advisories on seven of Woodbury’s 19 wells since 2017.

The city removed all seven of these wells from service, and constructed a temporary water treatment facility near the intersection of Valley Creek Road and Tower Drive that brought four of these wells back into service in summer 2020. This temporary facility will help bridge the water production gap until the long-term permanent water treatment facility is operational.

The water delivered to customers continues to meet all state and federal water quality standards and guidelines for PFAS.

Costs associated with the purchase of the property are fully funded by the State of Minnesota and 3M settlement agreement. Total costs for the facility construction are in development.

For several years, the city has been advocating for the majority of costs associated with treatment for PFAS to be funded through the settlement agreement. Updates on costs and treatment technologies will be forthcoming.

The location was selected for several reasons, including:

- the need for PFAS treatment in Woodbury;
- availability and development of land in the community;
- need for adequate space for treatment now and in the future;
- efficiencies of a centralized facility for operations and cost; and
- proximity to the south well field and anticipated additional future wells.

Careful and thoughtful design work will take place over the next few years with facility construction anticipated to begin around 2023/2024.

The future water treatment facility will be located south of Hargis Parkway and east of Radio Drive.
On Aug. 18, the State of Minnesota released its long-term Water Supply Plan to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination in East Metro drinking water. For the last three years, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have been working with East Metro communities to identify long-term solutions for protecting the water supply.

The work began in February 2018 when Minnesota’s attorney general and 3M Company reached a settlement agreement after the state filed a lawsuit in 2010 alleging that 3M’s production of PFAS had damaged drinking water and natural resources in the southeast Twin Cities metro area.

Ensuring a sustainable water supply for future generations has been a specific strategic priority for the city since 2015, and we have worked closely with the state – advocating for our residents and businesses – in developing the long-term plan.

As we continue to digest the state’s findings and final determinations regarding distribution of the remaining $700 million of 2018 3M settlement proceeds, it is important to know that the water delivered to our customers today continues to meet state and federal standards and guidelines for PFAS.

The most important outcomes for Woodbury in the state’s Water Supply Plan include:

- **Land acquisition for a long-term water treatment facility.**
- **Funding the construction of a long-term centralized water treatment facility and associated distribution system to treat all Woodbury public water production wells that measure greater than or equal to a health index of 0.5, which, as of today, is 15 of the city’s 19 wells.**

Given the state’s health index standard is 1.0, treating wells higher than 0.5 - but still under the threshold of 1.0 - is a critical win for us because it provides resilience in treatment should water quality standards change in the future. While we won’t know the final cost of the treatment facility until we complete the public bidding and subsequent construction process, we do expect it will be the largest public investment project in the city’s history. (See article on page 1 for details.)

- **Abandonment of one of the city’s existing public water production wells (permanently offline due to location and PFAS impacts) and replacement with one new public water production well.**

- **Supplying 18 homes on private wells with PFAS impacts with standalone point-of-entry treatment systems for PFAS removal.**

- **Connecting five other properties currently with private wells with PFAS impacts to the city’s public water system due to proximity of water mains.**

### Implementation of solutions under way

I am gratified that we have already taken many steps toward temporary and long-term solutions. Last year, we constructed a temporary water treatment plant – with state funding via 3M agreements – in record time. Today, we are actively pursuing expanding the temporary water treatment plant capacity, which will be needed until the long-term treatment facility is fully operational (see article on page 1). We are also implementing an additional production well to make up for lost capacity due to PFAS contamination as mentioned in the bullet list above.

The city will continue to advocate for residents and businesses as we work with state agencies to fully review and implement the Water Supply Plan, and we will continue to keep the public informed as we learn more.

The state held a virtual community meeting with East Metro residents on Sept. 21 to share information about the Water Supply Plan, and the city will be engaging you through multiple channels to gather feedback about the proposed treatment solutions for PFAS. We’ll also be discussing several water-related policy questions at our Oct. 20 Council workshop, which are always open to the public.

Details about the history of PFAS in Woodbury wells and testing results through 2020 are available on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov/PFAS. Find additional resources at 3msettlement.state.mn.us.

### Private wells

Private wells are the responsibility of private landowners. Private landowners should consider having their well tested. For details, visit health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfcs.html.

If you have questions about the city’s water system, contact Public Works at publicworks@woodburymn.gov or 651-714-3720.

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**The Woodbury newsletter is published 10 times per year by the City of Woodbury and mailed to all residents and businesses. Send comments to: Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125-2330. Phone: 651-714-3500. Email: jason.egerstrom@woodburymn.gov.**

**The City of Woodbury is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with the act, the Woodbury newsletter is available in other formats. Call Jason Egerstrom, 651-714-3500; TDD: 651-714-3568.**

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**Applications due Oct. 15 for advisory boards**

Friday, Oct. 15, is the deadline for submitting an application for appointment to a Woodbury advisory commission. Citizens appointed to these groups serve on a volunteer basis. The term is for three years in most instances.

This year, there are 14 openings on the city’s advisory boards.

In addition, there are up to two openings on the Parks and Natural Resources Commission and Planning Commission for 11th- and 12th-grade high school students who are Woodbury residents. The term for students is for one year.

In some instances, incumbents are eligible for reappointment. The groups are:

- Audit and Investment Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Parks and Natural Resources Commission
- Planning Commission
- Watershed District

Woodbury residents who are interested in serving with any of these advisory groups may call City Hall, 651-714-3300, to request an application. Applications also are available on the Woodbury website at woodburymn.gov/commissions. Descriptions of the various commissions also can be found there.

The City Council will interview applicants on Saturday, Nov. 6. New appointees begin their terms in January.

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**Land purchase... from page 1**

The state announced its long-term plan for addressing PFAS in the east metro water supply in August. Details are available at 3msettlement.state.mn.us.

Learn more about PFAS in Woodbury water at woodburymn.gov/pfas. Additional details about the state’s work on the East Metro water supply plan is available at 3msettlement.state.mn.us/DrinkingWaterSupply.
The judging is complete and 18 photos earned recognition in the 23rd annual “Focus on Woodbury” photo contest.

First place winners are Heidi Hopps in the people category; Nancy Berg, nature; Lorrie Burdeski, pets; Nikki Osho, events; and Kent Nye, landmarks. Woodbury Magazine also invited its readers to cast votes online for their favorite images; Minh Thi’s photo received the most votes and earned the “Readers’ Choice” award.

Second place winners are David Augustson (people), Jon Bayer (nature), Loriene Pearson (pets), Anna Denn (events) and Greg Hagen (landmarks). Taking third place honors are Stephanie Lundell (people), Kent Nye (nature), Braden Hopps (pets), Mandi Folks (events) and Zachary Colberg (landmarks).

Honorable mention winners are Loriene Pearson (people) and Darrin Cresswell (nature).

This year’s contest, sponsored by Woodbury Magazine, drew 198 entries. Judges were Woodbury Magazine staffers Hailey Almsted, editor; Sarah Dovolos, senior managing art director; and Allison Nolden, art director.

The winners will be recognized at the Oct. 13 City Council meeting.
No tricks, just treats at Afton Road Fire Station

Hey kids, when you’re out collecting treats on Halloween, don’t forget to stop by Woodbury’s Afton Road Fire Station. The firefighters will be handing out candy between 5 and 8 p.m. on Oct. 31!

The Afton Road Fire Station is located at 6301 Upper Afton Road in northwest Woodbury. The Fox Run Road, Radio Drive and Thames Road stations will not be open this year. Call 651-714-3600 with any questions.

Land purchased for water treatment

New fee supports parks and trails

Photo contest winners selected

Attend a virtual listening session on the proposed 2022 budget

The City Council is seeking input about the proposed 2022 budget at virtual listening sessions Tuesday, Oct. 26, from 10 to 11 a.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. These sessions will be held via Microsoft Teams, with a link posted on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov/VirtualMeetings as the meeting date approaches. Residents can provide feedback and ask questions regarding the proposed budget following a short presentation.

The proposed 2022 total levy, including the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy, is approximately $41.9 million. This is an increase of about $2.19 million or 5.5% above last year. With the growth in taxable market valuations and the derivative net tax capacity, the property tax levy impact to the median value home is estimated at 2.7% or an increase of $30. As part of the budget process, annual rate adjustments are also considered to appropriately maintain funding levels for city services such as emergency medical services; water and sewer utility; storm water utility; street lighting utility; and the enterprise facilities HealthEast Sports Center and Eagle Valley Golf Course.

The proposed budget will go before the City Council on Wednesday, Dec. 8. More information on the budget will be included in the November/December City Update newsletter. Visit woodburymn.gov/budget for the full 2022 proposed budget, proposed rate adjustments and budget highlights.

Clear the streets, check the mailboxes!

Winter parking rules begin Nov. 1

Woodbury’s snow plowing crews are gearing up for the upcoming winter season. Here are a few ways residents can help:

1. Remove play equipment from streets and cul-de-sacs.
2. Keep children safe from playing in snowbanks near the curbs.
3. Keep trash and recycling containers behind the curb.
4. Check that mailboxes and posts are set back from the curb and in good condition. Keep snow cleared away from mailboxes.

Winter parking restrictions

Residents and visitors also need to be aware that Woodbury’s winter parking regulations – banning on-street parking between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. – go into effect once again Nov. 1. The parking restrictions, which are designed to facilitate plowing during the snow season, continue through April 1.

City ordinance also prohibits on-street parking any time 2 or more inches of snow have accumulated, until after the street has been completely plowed. The 2-inch guideline applies to any hour of the day, any time of year.

The winter parking ordinance does not apply to private streets, only to public roadways. Residents who violate the ordinance will be ticketed. Be sure to tell relatives and guests who may visit your home about the winter parking restrictions.

Questions? Contact the Public Works Department, 651-714-3720 or publicworks@woodburymn.gov.