



Press Release

FROM: Stephanie Herman sherman@postfalls.gov
Public Information Office
City of Post Falls
208-457-3341

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● For immediate release

For information contact:

Craig Borrenpohl, Utilities Manager: cborrenpohl@postfalls.gov

Post Falls City Council Approves Updated Wastewater Treatment Master Plan

In a unanimous decision last Tuesday, the Post Falls City Council approved a new master plan outlining the necessary upgrades and modifications to the Water Reclamation Facility, which treats the wastewater from Post Falls and Rathdrum. The prior master plan, adopted in 2013, set a course, both technically and financially, for upgrades to remove additional phosphorus from the water to meet limits set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. While the prior plan required significant rate increases to meet this requirement, the new plan recommends modest annual increases of 2.5% to user fees to meet the operating and capital needs of the utility.

The plan carries on many of the central themes in the 2013 plan, including investment in property to allow for land application to recycled (treated) water on farm crops. Diverting some of the water that would otherwise be released to the Spokane River to a recycled water program allows the city to remain below the strict limits on the number of pounds of phosphorus which can be discharged into the river, even when factoring in expected growth. The new master plan outlines a nearly \$300 million dollar capital plan, which accounts for replacing aging equipment, meeting the treatment requirements imposed by state and federal law, and expanding to accommodate future growth. The primary funding mechanisms for the plan are user fees for the maintenance and replacement of existing systems, and capacity fees for expansion. Capacity fees are assessed to new or expanding users of the system. The expansion elements of the plan ensure the facility will remain ahead of anticipated growth, as it has for the last several decades.

Post Falls Mayor Ron Jacobson stated, "I'm pleased see that it's down to the two and half [percent increase]" as the past double-digit increases "were some painful increases". City Councilor Samantha Steigleder wanted to ensure user fees accounted for projected future users, and that the "need is distributed across the amount of [those users] paying." Craig Borrenpohl, the City's Utilities Manager and the lead on this project, explained that the user fees are distributed among those connected to the system and that the financial plan accounted for future growth in the calculations.

The approved master plan will now be submitted to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality for technical review. The plan itself does not commit the city to any future actions but provides a roadmap of what will be needed, when it will be needed, and how to pay for those needs.

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