

**PUBLIC NOTICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS OF THE
BERLIN MUNICIPAL WATER AND SEWER UTILITY**

The Berlin Municipal Water and Sewer Utility (Utility) has filed an application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) to increase water rates. The increase is necessary due to a 28.93 percent increase in gross plant investment and a 15.21 percent increase in operating expenses since the last water rate case was completed in 2015.

The total increase in water revenues requested is \$225,280 which will result in an estimated overall rate increase of 18.40 percent over the water utility's present revenues.

Currently, the Utility's total public fire protection (PFP) cost is \$364,871, which includes the additional storage, pumping, and distribution costs required to provide the high flows and pressures needed to fight fires. The Utility currently collects \$247,775 from the City of Berlin (City) for providing PFP water service to the City. This municipal PFP charge is based on 68 percent of the Utility's total PFP cost. The City collects the funds to pay for the municipal PFP charge through property taxes. The Utility recovers the remaining 32 percent of its total PFP cost, or \$117,096, through direct bills to water utility customers. The City recently approved changing the Utility's method of PFP cost recovery from a combination of municipal and direct PFP charges to 100 percent direct PFP charges collected through direct bills to water utility customers. The proposed total PFP cost of service is \$421,960. Accordingly, the Utility requested PSCW authorization to collect a direct PFP charge from each customer of the water utility and requested that the charge be based on the Equivalent Meters Method. This change will allow the Utility to continue to collect a portion of the PFP charge from property owners who benefit from the Utility's PFP service but who are not subject to property taxes. This request conforms with Wis. Stat. § 196.03(3)(b), which provides municipalities the option to charge PFP directly on the water utility bills of general service customers as well as non-general service customers. The Utility intends to continue to charge non-general service customers.

As a result of the request to change the method of collecting PFP charges, an average residential customer with a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch or $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch meter who uses 400 cubic feet of water per month will increase from \$27.42 to \$40.41, or 47.37 percent, which includes the overall increase from the rate case and the Utility's request to switch from a combination of municipal and direct PFP charges to 100 percent direct PFP charges.

A public hearing on the application has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. This hearing has no physical location. Parties and Commission staff appear by Zoom. Parties and Commission staff may use the telephone connection as a backup or if no practicable internet connection exists. Members of the public attend by Zoom or by audio-only telephone connection.

Join Zoom over the internet at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/my/pschearings>

To join Zoom telephone:

1. Dial: +1 312 626 6799
2. Enter: 809 513 2930 # (Meeting ID)

The Commission intends to livestream and record this hearing on YouTube. To access the livestream, go to the Commission's website at <http://psc.wi.gov>, click the dropdown menu labeled "News & Events", and select item labeled "Broadcasts".

A person may testify in this proceeding without becoming a party and without attorney representation. A person may submit this testimony in only one of the following ways:

- **Web Comment.** File a comment on the internet. Go to the Commission's web site at <http://psc.wi.gov>, click the dropdown menu labeled "Commission Action". Select the item labeled "File a Public Comment". On the next page select the "File a comment" link that appears for docket number 480-WR-103. Web comments shall be received no later than the Thursday, February 8, 2024.
- **Live Comment.** Make a live comment at the hearing. The ALJ may receive live comments from any member of the public in attendance after the close of any party and Commission staff testimony. The ALJ will receive such comments by stating the name of each member of the public connected to the hearing one at a time and asking if they would like to comment.
- **Mail Comment.** Send a comment by U.S. Mail. All comments submitted by U.S. Mail shall be received no later than Thursday, February 8, 2024 and shall be addressed to: Attn: Docket 480-WR-103 Comments, Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854.

To access the documents, schedule, and other information about this docket, go to the Commission's web site at <http://psc.wi.gov>, select the dropdown menu labeled "eServices". Select the item labeled "Docket Search (CMS)". On the next page enter 480-WR-103 in the spaces labeled "Case #" and select "Search".

If you have any questions, please contact the Berlin Municipal Water and Sewer Utility at (920) 361-5400.