

Glen Ellyn Public Engagement Q/A

Why are my water and sewer rates going up?

The Village engaged an independent third party expert in March 2022 to conduct a Water and Sewer Rate Study. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the sustainability of the Village's water and sewer rates. The expert analyzed the Village's budgets, financial statements, customer information, and other data and determined that the Village's water and sewer rates needed to increase to maintain a financially sustainable Water and Sewer Fund. They also recommended changes to the Village's water and sewer rate structure.

When did the Village discuss the rate study at public meetings?

The Village Finance Commission met with the water rate expert in September 2022, February 2023, and March 2023 to discuss the expert's findings and recommendations. The Village Board held workshops with the expert in January 2023 and June 2023, at which time various issues and concerns of the Board were discussed. The Board finally met in June 2023 at a public hearing to adopt the recommended FY 2024 water and sewer rates.

When was the last time the Village increased water and sewer rates?

The last time the Village increased water and sewer rates was in 2018.

Why can't the Village use other money, such as property or sales tax for the higher water and sewer costs?

The Village's Water and Sewer Fund is an Enterprise Fund, meaning that it is meant to be financially self-sufficient. This means only the rates and fees charged to water and sewer customers can be used to pay for water and sewer system costs. The Village must also maintain appropriate reserves in the Water and Sewer Fund.

Why is the Village changing its water and sewer rate structure?

More and more water and sewer utilities are moving towards increased fixed revenue. This is because most water and sewer system costs are fixed, meaning they don't vary with how much water customers use. The third party expert identified that the Village's expenses are over 60% fixed. Therefore, they recommended that the Village begin to increase the amount of fixed revenue generated by water and sewer rates. They also recommended that the Village discontinue charging customers for a minimum of 2,000 gallons per month. The new fixed fees do not include any minimum usage.

I've heard the Village needs to replace lead water service lines. Is that cost included in this study?

No. Although the Village has an estimate of what the lead service line replacement plan will cost, it is too unknown at this time. The Village will re-evaluate water rates in the future when the costs of the lead service line replacement program are known.

What is the new water and sewer rate structure?

The Village adopted a rate structure that includes a fixed monthly charge that varies by meter size. Smaller meters pay a smaller monthly charge than larger meters. The fixed monthly charge does not include any minimum water usage. All water usage is billed at a per 1,000 gallon rate. The specific rates are as follows:

Monthly Water Rates & Fees Effective 01/01/24		
	Within Village	Outside Village
Rate per 1,000 gallons	\$10.12	\$15.18
Fees Based on Meter Size		
5/8"	\$0.85	\$1.27
3/4"	\$1.27	\$1.91
1"	\$2.12	\$3.19
1 1/2"	\$4.25	\$6.37
2"	\$6.80	\$10.19
3"	\$12.74	\$19.11
4"	\$21.24	\$31.85
6"	\$42.47	\$63.71

Monthly Sewer Rates & Fees Effective 01/01/24		
	Within Village	Outside Village
Rate per 1,000 gallons	\$7.31	\$7.69
Fees Based on Meter Size		
5/8"	\$0.63	\$0.94
3/4"	\$0.94	\$1.41
1"	\$1.57	\$2.35
1 1/2"	\$3.13	\$4.70
2"	\$5.02	\$7.52
3"	\$9.40	\$14.11
4"	\$15.67	\$23.51
6"	\$31.35	\$47.02
Non-Metered Sewer Rate	\$47.11	\$47.11
Sewer Only Service Fee	\$3.25	\$3.25
Drainage Reimbursement Fee	\$3.00	\$3.00

What is a “meter size”?

Each water customer is connected to the Village’s system through a water meter that measures how much water each customer uses. These meters vary in size from 5/8” to 6” in diameter. Based on Illinois plumbing code and other Village ordinances, the size of each customer’s meter is determined when they connect to the system or make changes to the number of fixtures (sinks, toilets, washing machines, etc.) on their premises.

Why do larger meters pay more per month?

Larger meters have the ability to take more water from the system at any given time, and therefore are charged higher monthly fixed charges. This is based on the “capacity”, or amount of maximum demand, that each meter is capable of pulling from the system.

Are residential and commercial properties charged different rates?

No. The Village charges all water and sewer customers based on the same rate structure. The only things considered are the size of the customer’s meter size and how much water is used each month.

How do I find out what my meter size is?

You will need to locate your water meter, which is inside the home, generally towards the front of the home, usually in the basement if there is one. The meter could be located in a closet or behind a wall, if you know where the water shutoff inside the home is at, the meter should be right in that general area. The photos below are examples of different register styles that may be present in the Village, with the size circled in yellow for reference.

Example of a 5/8” Register



Example of a 3/4” register



Example of a 1” meter



If you are unable to determine the size of your meter, please fill out a request in [SeeClickFix](#), with a photo of the register head if possible and Public Works will respond to the inquiry.

What is an appropriate amount for a water/sewer reserve fund?

There are several industry publications that provide guidance related to utility reserves ranging from one month of operating costs to 45 days of total expenses. The Village's rate study recommended a minimum fund balance policy based on the annual operating and capital expense of the water and sewer systems. The minimum reserve recommendation was 90 days of operating costs and 30 days of average capital costs, which totals about \$3.3 million in 2024.

What is the timeline for determining the cost to replace the Village's lead service lines?

The Village is required to provide a final inventory to the Illinois EPA in April of 2024, along with an initial replacement plan. A final plan for replacing lead service lines is currently due in April of 2027, with the timeline to completely remove all lead based on the total number of services requiring replacement. The Village continues to work on the inventory, develop a plan, and determine costs, along with review, with an expectation that the total number of services identified will have a requirement to address those within 15 years (2042). For more information related to lead, please visit the Village's website here [Lead in Drinking Water | Glen Ellyn, IL](#).

What amount/percentage will the average customer's bill increase in 2024?

The Village's average customer is billed for a 5/8" meter and 4,000 gallons per month. In 2024, this customer's total water and sewer bill will increase \$2.76, which is a 3.9% increase.

What are some examples of the fixed costs that make up 60% of the Village's expenses?

All the Village's water and sewer costs are fixed except costs related to purchasing water from the DuPage Water Commission and costs related to wastewater treatment paid to the Glenbard Wastewater Authority. Therefore, costs related to operating, maintaining, repairing, and replacing are fixed, meaning they do not change with the amount of water the Village sells. These costs are related to the staff, materials, equipment, and supplies necessary to keep the systems operating 24/7.

If I don't live in my home the whole year, am I still charged the fixed fees?

Yes. The Village's system needs to be operated and maintained 24/7 whether water demand is high or low. The fixed fees are designed to cover a portion of the Village's fixed costs that are incurred regardless of how much water is being used. Therefore, homes and businesses that use no water in a given month are still charged a fixed fee.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please visit glenellyn.org/WaterRates2024 for more information.

You can also email WaterRates@glenllyn.org with any questions or concerns.

For specific billing questions, please contact the Water Billing department at billing@glenellyn.org or 630-547-5335.