



Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Summer 2020

On Page Two

**Why Is Your
Water Bill
So High?**

**To Serve
You Better**

**How to Read
Your Water Meter**

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\$31,444 in grants provided to 156 accounts in 2019

WaterWorks keeps tap water flowing

Every summer, the water utility asks its customers to contribute to *WaterWorks*, a program that assists needy residents with their water bills. *WaterWorks* is jointly administered between Saint Paul Regional Water Services and the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties (CAP).

This year, as the pandemic has affected the jobs and incomes of many of our customers, your assistance in keeping the water running for those of limited means is needed more than ever. We ask for your support in any amount you can contribute.

A brochure with a contribution form is enclosed with this mailing for your use. You can also sign up to contribute at www.stpaul.gov/waterworks.

To let you know how your

contributions were used last year, \$31,444 in grants went to customers in need in 2019. This amounted to 156 grants, with the average amount of the grant being \$174. A grant assists the customer in need with paying the water and sewer bill to ensure that they continue to receive water services. This might be an individual, a family or another adult with dependents. So, while 156 grants were provided, your contributions kept more than 156 people supplied with water service.

Applicants must meet certain criteria to receive the grants, which include water service termination or pending termination, financial crisis, and qualification under low-income guidelines. While we are currently suspending water shut offs if customers are unable to pay their bills, we will use the same criteria. Please note that

Water Works continued on page 2

Public hearing on 2021 rates set for Sept. 8

Every year SPRWS holds a public hearing on the proposed water rates and fees for the upcoming year.

This year that public hearing is scheduled to take place at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 8, at SPRWS, 1900 Rice Street, Saint Paul, MN 55113.

However, virtual participation may be necessary if social distancing is still in place. Please check our website

at stpaul.gov/water for updates on how to access the meeting as Sept. 8 approaches.

The discussion on rates and water fees as they relate to the overall budget will be followed by the regular Board of Water Commissioners meeting. At that time, the Board may vote to recommend approval of the 2021 budget to the city council, including the rates and fees proposed for 2021.

**Check your account anytime at
<https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>**

Our mission is to provide reliable, quality water and services at a reasonable cost.

To Serve You Better

To talk to a customer service representative call customer service at (651) 266-6350 and press "0" between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Bills may be paid in the following ways:

Credit Card

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express credit/debit cards. To make a credit card payment, or to get information on your account status 24/7, call (651) 266-6350 or go online to: <https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>. Or pay in person at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1900 Rice St., Maplewood

Money Order or Check

In person, by return mail with your bill stub, or in our drop box:

For next-day processing, at McCarrons Center. The drop box is located in the visitor parking area; available 24 hours a day.

Cash

In person only, at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Direct Payment Plan

Have your payment deducted electronically from your checking or savings account. You'll still receive a statement; it will indicate which date the payment will be deducted from your account.

How to read your meter

Your water meter is located inside your home, generally about one foot off of the floor in your basement. It could also be in a crawl space, pit in the floor, or utility room.

The meter register is about three inches in diameter. It has an LED box for displaying numbers.

You will need to activate the LED by shining a flashlight. Read all nine numbers from left to right.



Use the QR Code to access a video on how to use your water meter to check for toilet leaks.

More information at stpaul.gov/water.

Is your water bill high?

The number one cause of high water bills is toilet leaks. Often silent, four gallons of water a minute can enter the sewer directly from the tank through the toilet bowl. If you have a high water bill, checking for toilet leaks is the first course of action.

But there are other causes of high water bills. This year, the sheer amount of time we are spending at home can impact the amount of water we use while there, along with more people in the house as college students return. Other causes may be leaks in faucets and outdoor irrigation systems and line items on your bill.

Is it a seasonal increase? Summers are often marked by:

- Watering lawns and gardens, new sod and trees
- Washing cars
- Filling pools
- Using water-cooled air conditioning units
- Using pressure washers

Were there more people in the house?

Additional household members, including college students returning home, can increase water use throughout the house for everything from showers to laundry to flushing toilets.

Are you paying more for sewer charges?

For single and two-family homes, we set sewer use rates in the winter months when use is typically low. That rate is then capped for the rest of the year. You will not be charged for sewer use beyond your cap during that year.

However, if you had a leak during the sewer-setting winter months, your sewer setting rate will be higher than normal, capping your sewer rate at a higher level for the rest of the year.

Have a previous balance? Other charges? Late fees?

If the bill payment was late, a 5 percent late fee would be added to your balance. Failure to pay all of a previous bill would also increase the next bill.

We want to assist our customers in determining the cause of a high water bill. Please call customer service at 651-266-6350 with questions.

WaterWorks helps those in need

Water Works continued from page 1

the water bills stays on the account until fully paid, so your thoughtful gift is still needed. Grants have annual limits and are subject to availability of funds. Community Action Partnership determines whether a customer qualifies under Minnesota state median income guidelines from the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The program received \$30,795 in contributions last year, of which \$5,000 came from matching funds from SPRWS. The remainder

of the funds came directly from customer contributions. One-time contributions totaled \$4,639 while on-going contributions totaled \$21,156. The \$649 difference between contributions and distributions were the result of a carry-over from the previous year.

The families who benefitted from your generosity and the water utility thank those of you who contributed to *WaterWorks* last year. We look to you for your continued support this year.