



St. James Parish Council

Ryan Louque
Chairman

P. O. Box 176
Vacherie, Louisiana 70090
(225) 562-2400
FAX (225) 562-2401
TDD: (225) 562-8500
council@stjamesla.com

Vondra Etienne-Steib
Vice-Chairwoman

Linda Hubbell
Secretary

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the following entitled ordinance was introduced at a regular meeting of the Parish Council of the Parish of St. James, State of Louisiana, on July 17, 2024, and laid over for publication of notice:

PROPOSED ORDINANCE 24-15 ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 114 ARTICLE III, WATER, OF THE ST. JAMES PARISH CODE OF ORDINANCES TO CLEARLY DEFINE THE CATEGORIES OF CONSUMER, MANDATORILY LINK ALL WATER RATES TO THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, AND INCREASE THE WATER UNIT AND SYSTEM RATES CHARGED BY THE ST. JAMES PARISH WATER DISTRICTS 1 AND 2 TO MEET THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRODUCTION OF POTABLE WATER

WHEREAS, St. James Parish Government operates and maintains a natural gas and water utility system for residential, commercial, and industrial consumers within St. James Parish, Louisiana,

WHEREAS, the utilities division of St. James Parish Government is considered an enterprise resource organization and taxes or millages do not exist to support its funding; and,

WHEREAS, the costs of operating and maintaining the St. James Parish gas and water utility system is funded solely by fees collected for products and services provided to consumers; and,

WHEREAS, the costs of operating the St. James Parish water collection, treatment, and distribution systems continue to increase due to inflation, increased maintenance costs, and system upgrades; and,

WHEREAS, the cost of maintaining the St. James Parish water collection, treatment, and distribution systems continue to rise due to stricter, unfunded, state and federal mandates; and,

WHEREAS, the increased costs associated with regulatory requirements and the need to maintain minimum water standards in accordance with federal and state doctrine; and,

WHEREAS, there have been recent, numerous, and costly modification projects completed throughout the water system to increase the water supply to meet the demand of all St. James Parish consumers:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, BY THE ST. JAMES PARISH COUNCIL, that Chapter 114, Article II, Section 114-48 of the St. James Parish Code of Ordinances shall be amended a described in Exhibit A attached hereto:

EXHIBIT A

Sec. 114-48. - Water rates established.

- (a) **Unit rates charged** for water service by the St. James Parish **Utilities Division** shall be determined by **actual or averaged** consumption per month and are hereby **categorized** to be: Residential, Small Business, Commercial, and Industrial. All such rates shall be as established by the St. James Parish Council **and automatically adjusted annually in accordance with the CPI identified in Sec. 114-49.**
- (b) **System charges (flat rates) for both the water and the natural gas distribution systems shall be equal, standardized, and automatically adjusted annually in accordance with the CPI identified in Sec. 114-28 and Sec. 114-49 of this ordinance.**
- (c) Any established consumer who has not had water service for the entire previous calendar year shall have his water rate established with respect to definition and an average of his prior months' consumption.
- (d) For their water rate to be established, any new consumer shall declare to the parish utilities division, to the best of their knowledge, their intended use and anticipated consumption at the commencement of service. Failure to do so shall subject the consumer to a penalty not to exceed 1½ times the correct rate as determined by definition and average monthly consumption for the amount of water consumed.
- (e) These base rates are established for the parish utilities division, and any cost adjustments would be added to these rates under regulations previously adopted by the parish council.
- (f) All utility rates shall be established by the St. James Parish Council using a phased increase as illustrated in the chart below:

Utility Rate Phased Increases					
Rate Type	Current Rate	10/1/2024	1/1/2025	4/1/2025	7/1/2025
Water Unit Rate	\$3.00	\$3.25	\$3.50	\$3.75	\$4.00
Water System Rate (Flat)	\$11.00	\$13.25	\$15.50	\$17.75	\$20.00
Gas Unit Rates	Gas unit rates will be established using the WACOG methodology illustrated in Sec. 114-29 of this ordinance.				
Gas System Rate (Flat)	\$8.50	\$11.37	\$14.25	\$17.13	\$20.00
Remarks	<i>Using the phased method listed above, St. James Parish utility rates will increase 25% per quarter until the target rates are reached on July 1, 2025. Rate increases thereafter will be in accordance with the appropriate consumer price index identified in this ordinance.</i>				

NOTICE IS HEREBY, FURTHER, GIVEN that the Parish Council of said Parish will meet at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 7, 2024, in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse, 5800 Hwy 44, Convent, and on Wednesday, August 21, 2024 in the Council Chambers of the Parish Courthouse Annex, 2631 Hwy 20, Vacherie, at which time there will be a public hearing on the adoption of the aforesaid ordinance.

s/ Ryan Louque
Chairman

s/Linda Hubbell
Secretary

Note: St. James Parish will provide, upon request, reasonable accommodation to any disabled individual wishing to attend the meeting. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation is requested to contact 1-800-846-5277 (TDD), 1-800-947-5277 (Voice) or 562-2400 (Handicapped) to discuss the particular accommodation needed.