

BHFP posted 3/3/24

City of Bolivar works with stakeholders to intervene in Liberty rate hike

In light of news about proposed water and wastewater rate increases by Liberty Utilities, the City of Bolivar and its elected officials are taking steps to intervene on behalf of the community's citizens.

During the past week, Bolivar's mayor, aldermen, and City staff have worked alongside the City's legal counsel to formulate a response to the rate increases Liberty Utilities is proposing to the Missouri Public Service Commission. That commission ultimately decides if Liberty's proposed new rates will be put in place.

In turn, the City has taken several definitive actions.

First, the City of Bolivar is working with other local stakeholders to form a unified response to the proposed rate increases.

City administration has met with some of Bolivar's other large volume commercial water users, including the Bolivar R-1 School District, Citizens Memorial Hospital and Citizens Memorial Health Care Foundation, Southwest Baptist University, and the Bolivar Area Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the proposed rate increases.

The City is also working on a collective intervention with the Bolivar R-1 School District, Southwest Baptist University, and possibly more utility users, for submission to the Missouri Public Service Commission by Thursday, April 4, which is the deadline to formally intervene.

"Our goal is to form a strong coalition to express our concerns to the Missouri Public Service Commission," Dr. Richard Asbill, Bolivar R-1 superintendent, said. "We all agree the proposed rate increases would adversely affect Bolivar's businesses, schools, and residents, and we're committed to standing together to be a voice for the community."

"This kind of rate hike would be exceptionally challenging, not only to our educational plan but for the community as a whole," Dr. Scott Moats, SBU's Executive Vice President for Administration and Chief Business Officer, said. "The negative impact would be wide-ranging, and we are grateful for the opportunity to stand with other stakeholders in solidarity against the increases."

City administration also met with Liberty Utilities representatives to further assess the situation and express concerns.

In any event, the Board of Aldermen for the City of Bolivar has also directed the City to formally intervene in the rate increase case to oppose the proposed rate increases with the Missouri Public Service Commission.

"As we move forward, we will continue to look for ways to be the voice of the citizens and Bolivar as a whole," Mayor Christopher D. Warwick said. "Such an increase in utility rates is not something we'd wish upon any of Bolivar's residents. As your elected officials and City staff, we live and work in Bolivar. We're part of the community, and we want to represent you in this matter."

Warwick said Bolivar's Board of Aldermen were scheduled to meet in a special executive session at 5 p.m. Monday, April 1, to further discuss legal options related to the proposed rate increases.

According to the Missouri Public Service Commission, applications to formally intervene and participate in the water and sewer rate cases must be filed no later than Thursday, April 4, with

the Secretary of the Missouri Public Service Commission at P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102, or by using the Commission's Electronic Filing and Information System at [www.psc.mo.gov](http://www.psc.mo.gov).

All Bolivar Liberty Utilities customers are urged to submit their comments about the proposed rate increase, as well.

Individuals can continue to submit comments about Liberty Utilities' proposed rate increases to either the Office of the Public Counsel by mail at Governor Office Building, 200 Madison Street, Suite 650, P.O. Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102-2230; by email at [opcservice@opc.mo.gov](mailto:opcservice@opc.mo.gov); and by telephone at 866-922-2959. The community may also contact the Public Service Commission Staff by mail at P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102; by email at [pscinfo@psc.mo.gov](mailto:pscinfo@psc.mo.gov); and by telephone at 1-800-392-4211.

The Office of the Public Counsel is a separate state agency that represents the general public in matters before the Commission.

Watch the City of Bolivar, Missouri, Facebook page for more information as it becomes available.