**Bedford Municipal Utilities**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**September 11, 2012**

1. **Can tax dollars from the City of Bedford general fund be used to finance sewer and water projects through the Bedford Municipal Utilities?**

* No. According to Indiana State Statute all funds belonging to each municipally owned utility shall be kept by the municipal fiscal officer as separate funds.

1. **Are there other ways of financing utility projects versus a rate increase?**

* Grant dollars are often available to help assist with the cost of major utility projects. The City of Bedford has applied for the following competitive grants for utility infrastructure but has not been successful. One of the main criticisms of these grant applications is that utility rates were too low and diminished the demonstration of need in the community.
* Spider Creek Lift Station Repairs – 2008 & 2009
* Storm Water Infrastructure - 2010

Eastern & Western Avenues

* U Street Storm Water Channel Repairs/Replacement
* Lincoln Avenue
* Stellar Communities – 2011 & 2012

Water Tower Repairs

Spider Creek Lift Station Repairs

Lincoln Avenue Storm Water Capacity

U Street Storm Water Channel Repairs/Replacement

1. **How will groundwater and stormwater inflow/infiltration into the sewer system be addressed?**
   * + The City of Bedford is working with the engineers of Bernardin, Lochmeuller, and Associates to develop a plan of correction that will be submitted to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) by March 2013. A component of that plan will be to reduce inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system.
2. **What is the priority of the Plan of Correction?**
   * + The priority of the plan will be how to prevent sewer overflows. It is believed that a combination of reducing the amount of inflow/infiltration of stormwater into the system through replacing and inlining pipes, utilizing retention ponds or wetlands, and also removing storm connections (i.e. sump pumps, down spouts, home drains, etc.) as well as, upsizing the pumping capacity at sanitary sewer lift stations will be utilized to address these issue.
3. **Will there be funds set aside to finance future infrastructure improvements?**
   * + Yes. Funds from rates are set aside on a monthly basis for infrastructure improvements. These are included in the depreciation fund, water tower fund, insurance, debt service, as well as others. This is a regular practice; however, the amount and cost of repairs needed in recent months has depleted these funds and must be restored. In addition, state statute regulates the minimum operating balance that must be maintained. .
4. **What is stormwater?**

* “Stormwater runoff is generated when precipitation from rain and snowmelt events flows over land or impervious surfaces and does not percolate into the ground”. Impervious surfaces include paved streets, parking lots, sidewalks, driveways, and building rooftops. More information on stormwater can be found at the following website through the EPA at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=6>.

1. **Why do we have to address stormwater issues?**

* In 1999 the EPA established requirements for Small MS4 Stormwater Program Requirements, which include Public Education and Outreach, Public Participation and Involvement, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Control, Post-Construction Runoff Control, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

1. **What will the stormwater fee be used for?**

* The stormwater fee can be used to support all of the MS4 Stormwater Program requirements. While this is the case, the majority of funds will be utilized to fund projects that will address stormwater problems throughout the city. This includes installation, repair, separation of storm and sanitary sewer drains, as well as, other projects that keep stormwater out of the sanitary sewer system.

1. **What will residents receive from the stormwater improvements?**

* The Plan of Correction will prioritize projects that will be implemented to decrease sewer overflows and thereby improve the public health and environment of our entire community. Compliance with IDEM will prevent future violations, enforcement decrees, and fines, which will keep rates at minimum levels.

1. **How many Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs) will each piece of property be assessed in calculating the stormwater fee?**

* Each residential property will be assessed as one (1) ERU. One (1) ERU is based on 3,000 square feet and the cost for one (1) ERU is $5.00. All other properties will be assessed per square footage of impervious area. There is a cap of $250 per month for all non-residential properties.
* Residential lots with no impervious area will not be charged a monthly stormwater fee.

1. **How can I learn more about stormwater issues?**

* The City of Bedford will be hosting multiple meetings throughout the city to explain more about stormwater requirements, fees, and projects. These meetings will be targeted to non-residential groups (i.e. businesses, non-profits, churches, etc.) but all residents are welcome to attend.

1. **How is the water quality in the City of Bedford?**

* The water provided through the City of Bedford Municipal Utilities meets or exceeds all Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) requirements.
* The EPA and IDEM set acceptable levels of substances in the water.
* The City of Bedford tests for 300 different substances in the water that must be below detection levels or the maximum contaminate level, which are reported monthly to IDEM.
* All chemicals used in the treatment of our water are food grade, which meets EPA standards.
* The City of Bedford publishes an annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) that is located on the website at [www.bedford.in.us](http://www.bedford.in.us) under the Utilities Department, which explains in detail where city water comes from, the type and amount of substances that are in the water, and the levels that are deemed acceptable by EPA and IDEM.
* More information regarding safe drinking water can be found at [www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater).

1. **What resources are available to families struggling to pay their monthly bills?**

* Those that are unable to pay their bill can meet with utilities staff to set up a payment plan. Individuals are also referred to organizations that provide utility assistance and household budgeting.