

Town of West Springfield

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William C. Reichelt
Mayor

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MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL ISSUE WATER-SEWER RATE RELIEF & SECOND WATER METERS MADE AVAILABLE

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Effective July 1, 2020, all residents who qualify for a property tax exemption will also qualify for a ten percent (10%) discount on their residential water and sewer rate. Individuals who qualified for a property tax exemption during fiscal year 2020 (as determined by the Board of Assessors) will be eligible for the water-sewer discount automatically as of July 1, 2020. In addition, the DPW recently promulgated regulations allowing for a separate second water meter for outdoor water use that will not include a sewer use charge.

The water-sewer rate relief was a joint initiative between the Mayor and the Town Council. The initiative involved collaboration and participation from both the Department of Public Works as well as the Assessor's Office. As the sewer rate-setting authority, the Town Council authorized this relief by resolution at its meeting on June 15, 2020. The Mayor, as the water rate-setting authority, issued an Executive Order today to complete this joint effort.

These joint legislative efforts will provide relief to those individuals who qualify for residential property tax exemptions, including seniors, veterans, blind individuals and surviving spouses who meet criteria as established by state law (specifically M.G.L. c. 59, § 5). The discount will be applied automatically by the Department of Public Works as of July 1 in the fiscal year following approval of an exemption by the Board of Assessors. No additional paperwork would be required of the residents; the Assessors' Office would notify the DPW annually of the individuals who are eligible for the discount. Individuals are not eligible for mid-year discounts.

Mayor Reichelt praised the efforts of the Council as well as the assistance of the Town departments in enacting these measures: "I am grateful for the collaboration and assistance of the Town Council in making this joint relief initiative possible. Councilor George Kelly initially suggested the discount program and, with the leadership of President Griffin and the assistance of the Town departments, I am pleased we were able to make this happen for residents."

In addition to the water-sewer rate relief, as of June 12, residents may now apply for a second water meter to have their outdoor water usage billed separately, without incurring sewer use charges for water that is not discharged into the municipal sewer system. Information regarding the installation of second water meters, as well as the application can be found on the DPW's website: www.townofwestspringfield.org/government/departments/public-works. The cost of the application fee covers the materials provided by the Town, including the water meter and the radio read device.

Mayor Reichelt added, "I am pleased that we are able to offer the option of a second water meter to our residents as an opportunity to defray some utility costs that are generated by the use of water outdoors."

Both of these initiatives are additional pieces of the economic relief incentives that the Town is working on in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Reichelt previously authorized extensions of deadlines for tax and other payments as part of these efforts. In addition, Mayor Reichelt and the Town Council are continuing to explore other avenues to rejuvenate the economy of West Springfield.

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