



November 12, 2024 – Superintendent’s Report

ADMIN UPDATE:

The Utility is seeking approval of the Scope Appendix to the Engagement Letter dated July 15, 2024, between the City of Lawrence and Baker Tilly Group, LP for a Not to Exceed Amount of \$25,000.00 which would be split \$12,500.00 for water and \$12,500.00 for sewer for budget preparation assistance for the 2025 Utility Budget. This scope Appendix is the formal written service agreement that this Board voted on and approved at its previous meeting on October 22, 2024, until such written document could be provided as to not delay the start of this work.

On tonight’s agenda we also have the proposed meeting dates for the Utility Service Board for year 2025.

The Utility continues to work with Wessler Engineering on the necessary water main relocations for the INDOT Pendleton Pike Safety Improvements Project currently underway at 56th Street & Pendleton Pike along with Mitthoefer Road & Pendleton Pike. The first advertisement inviting bids for the Project will be run in the Indy Star on Friday November 8, 2024, and the second advertisement inviting bids will be in the Indy Star on November 15, 2024. The Utilities will hold a Pre-Bid Meeting here in the Public Assembly Room on November 20, 2024, at 1:00pm and then hold the public meeting to open and read the bids allowed on December 2, 2024, at 10:00am. If everything goes as planned, we intend to present the Board with Wessler Engineering’s recommendation after bid review to award the project at the December 10, 2024, meeting.

The Utilities has one account adjustment at 12337 Cobblestone South Drive on the agenda for approval this evening and the Utility recommends approval.

In response to Council President Betty Robinson’s request presented at the October 22, 2024, Utility Service Board Meeting regarding the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) and the Winter Assistance Fund (WAF) the findings of the Utility investigation into these matters are as follows.

- Lawrence Utilities is currently a vendor with the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) with that expiring on September 30, 2025 at which time the Utility will need to renew.
- When I typed in EAP.ihcda.in.gov and the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority page came up, I clicked on the quick link “How do I apply for water assistance” the information below is what I found.

The portion of the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) that helped with water and wastewater bills was called the "Low-income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), which was a temporary emergency water/wastewater program that helped low-income households and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was used to fund a one-time benefit for eligible households who had water/wastewater services with a participating Indian utility vendor. That funding was available to be used through September 2023. Currently, LIHWAP is closed with no additional funding available.”
- In the EAP Vendor Training for Municipalities, PY2025, dated August 2024 from the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority it states on slide 15 under “Unallowable Expenses” that EAP funds may not be applied to Garbage, Water or Sewer bills.

- When I investigated the Moratorium that Council President Robinson mentioned I found the Indiana Moratorium Law Code 8-1-2-121. Under that code electric and natural gas utilities in Indiana may not disconnect a customer between December 1 and March 15 IF the customer is:
 1. Receiving help from the federally funded Emergency Assistance Program (EAP),
or
 2. Qualified for EAP funds have formally applied for the program at his or her local EAP intake office and has provided the utility with written proof.
- When Lawrence Utilities customers call in and inquire about assistance with paying water/wastewater bills we do refer them to a list of ~25 organizations that may be able to assist them if they qualify for their assistance and funding is available that Councilor Robinson had provided to us from the Lawrence Township Trustee's Office earlier this year. On the City of Lawrence web page (www.cityoflawrence.org) if you click on "City Government", then click on "Utilities", then click on "Water/Sewer Bill Assistance Program", information populates that tells you about the program. It specifically states that the water/sewer assistance was through 2022-2023 while funding is available. As you scroll down the page it also states how to apply for the other types of assistance through the John H. Boner Community Center and lists the ~25 resources that residents can contact to see if assistance is available.

This was all the information I could find regarding Councilor Robinson's request at this time. If she knows of any other information that could help us in looking into this matter further, we would appreciate her sharing that with us for review. At this time, I have found no information stating that there is funding currently available to assist Lawrence Utilities customers with water and sewer bill payment assistance.

BILLING ADJUSTMENTS:

1. Approval of a sanitary sewer adjustment at 12337 Cobblestone South Drive for \$518.92 due to a leak in the meter pit