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Emmitsburg reduces surcharge, impact fees

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The Emmitsburg Town Council voted unanimously Monday evening to reduce the municipality's water and sewer surcharges and impact fee.

In addition, water and sewer use rates for heavy-use water and sewer customers were increased.

Consideration of a possible reduction of fees came about as a result of a request received previously from representatives of Ryan Homes to reduce fees to cut new home construction costs and allow the Brookfield developers to reduce the price tag for new homes.

Emmitsburg's water and sewer charges added \$22,000 to the price of a new home; not counting charges added by Frederick County.

Ryan Homes has since pulled out of the Emmitsburg development.

As a result of Monday night's council actions:

4 The water surcharge was reduced from \$7,000 to \$3,500;

4 The sewer surcharge was reduced from \$7,000 to \$3,500;

4 Water use fees were increased for those who use more than 20,000 gallons of water per quarter;

4 The sewer connection fee of \$4,000 was raised to \$8,000; and

4 The sewer use fees were increased for the top 20 percent of the system users.

These fees are in addition to the \$5,000 connection fee for each service and tap connection.

The surcharges were initially established by the town to help fund water and sewer system overhauling, and upgrades, especially regarding the much-deteriorated wastewater collection system.

According to Town Manager David Haller, the water and sewer infrastructure is running at about a \$300,000 annual rate of depreciation, and that a \$100,000 deficit was projected under current revenues on that depreciation.

However, even with the fee reductions, the user rate increases and the sewer connection increase will "close the gap" on that \$100,000 shortfall.

Council also voted Monday to slash the impact fees from \$3,200 per new home to \$1,200.

Haller had opposed the original increase that had occurred several years ago and recommended reducing it Monday night.

"I don't think there was ever a \$3,200 impact on the town (caused) by a house being built," Haller said.

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