

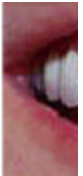


# Trail-Gazette

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## The price of water

Tap fees for new customers may see increase to meet escalating costs

By John Cordsen

Water tap fees for new customers wanting to connect to the Estes Park municipal water system may increase drastically if a utility department proposal is accepted. One-time connection charges would increase approximately 143 percent for new customers if the rate increase is approved later this year by the town board.

The current connection charges for new customers is \$7,240 for a single family hookup. The proposed increase is to \$10,390.

There are two components to the Town's connection charge structure. One is a System Development Charge (SDC) and the other is a water right fee. According to utilities director Bob Goehring, the current SDC portion of the fee has not changed since 1995 when it was set at \$1,840. The proposal is to raise it to \$4,940, an increase of 268 percent.

The water rights fee was last increased in 2003 following a study by the company of Black and Veatch. It was increased from \$2,000 to \$5,400. The latest suggestion is to increase this to \$5,450.

Fees for multi-family units, accommodations and commercial would also be increased under the proposal presented Tuesday night to the Town board at its March 11 meeting. Multi-family connections would increase from \$5,068 to \$7,275; accommodations from \$4,344 to \$6,235 and commercial to \$3,270 from \$2,300. All increases are based upon an ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit).

Goehring explained that the one-time connection charges are a way for the utility to recover a portion of the cost of increasing the system capacity of the water department to meet the demands new customers place on the system.

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"We need to update the two fees because of the upcoming improvements to the water system," said Goehring.

The Town board will hold a rate hearing during its April 22 meeting to hear testimony on the proposed increase.

Liquor License

Trustees approved a stipulation agreement with Agapemou, Ltd. to suspend the liquor license of Kelli's Lounge located on the second floor of the building at 110 W. Elkhorn for violations of state liquor codes, including sale to an underage person and failure to allow inspection or access to a licensed premise by law enforcement personnel.

The stipulation was for 51 days with 21 days being held in abeyance. The penalty for selling to a minor is a 21-day license suspension. The penalty for failure to allow inspection is 30-days.

According to the agreement signed by Agapemou president Anastasi Kermamidis, Kelli's Lounge will be closed from 12:01 a.m., March 12 through 11:59 p.m., April 11.

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