



The Village of Northfield

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October 18, 2022

Additional Information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sewerage and Maintenance Rates Increase, effective January 1, 2023

Re: Commercial & Industrial Properties and Lee Eaton Elementary School
Ordinance No. 2022-52 Passed by Village Council on October 12, 2022

Background and Facts:

- The Village of Northfield (Village) owns, operates and maintains all sanitary sewer and storm sewer main pipes within the Village of Northfield corporate limit lines. The segmented sewer pipes, connected to manhole structures, are located within the public road rights-of-way and within sewer easements throughout the Village.
- There is approximately 75,518 linear feet, or approximately 14.1 miles, of **public sanitary sewer** main consisting of 8", 12" and 15" pipe-diameter sizes throughout the Village. Also, there are approximately 356 sanitary manhole structures. There is one (1) sanitary sewer lift station owned and operated by the Village.
- There is approximately 91,780 linear feet, or approximately 17.4 miles, of **public storm sewer** main consisting of 8", 10", 12", 15", 18", 21", 24", 27", 30", 33", 36", 39", 42", 48", 60" and 66" pipe-diameter sizes throughout the Village. Also, there are approximately 202 storm manhole structures and 668 catch basin structures.
- Your **1st quarterly sewer bill you receive in 2023** will reflect the updated quarterly sewer service and maintenance charge for your property.

General Reasons for Increased Sewer Rates:

Sewer rates throughout Ohio and the United States have risen in recent years for a variety of reasons including:

- Federal environmental mandates.
- Aging infrastructure (storm and sanitary sewer pipes, manholes, and inlet/catch basins) and the need for capital improvements needed for reliable and safe sewer systems.
- Rising costs for operations and maintenance (equipment, personnel, insurance, electricity, etc.).
- Consumer growth and higher demand.
- The Village of Northfield has not increased sewer service and maintenance charges since March 13, 2013.

Sewer rates range widely among utilities and depend on numerous factors (including economies of scale, access to loans and other factors listed above). However, the trend of rising rates for all types of storm water and wastewater utilities is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

Specifically, sewer rate adjustments in the Village are needed to:

- Fund continual operating expenses, system maintenance, and growth.
- Replenish cash and build reserves to reasonable levels to fund important infrastructure improvements in the coming years to maintain well-functioning sanitary and storm sewer systems.
- Sewers are typically built to last 50 years, but some sewers are now approaching 65+ years old.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

1. What is an MCF?

An MCF is a unit of measurement that equals one thousand (1,000) cubic feet. Your City of Cleveland Division of Water (CWD) bill is determined by the amount of water you use (in MCF) in calculating the consumption charge. Please note that 1 MCF = 7,480 gallons of water. Please review your monthly CWD bill for your current and monthly water usages.

2. How did the Village calculate my water usage used to assign my sewerage and maintenance rates found in Table 1042.14-3 of Section 1042.14 of the Village of Northfield Codified Ordinances?

Through the CWD, the Village of Northfield Administration purchased two (2) 6-month water meter read tables for all commercial and industrial properties located within the Village. Water usage in MCF's were obtained from April 2019 through September 2019 and from December 2021 through May 2022. 6-month average water meter reads were determined and compared for both 6-month time periods. The 12-month average monthly water usage was then calculated and utilized in your determining the new 2023 quarterly sewer service and maintenance charge found in Table 1042.14-3.

3. Why did the Village decide to change from a standard flat fee sewer service and maintenance charge to a system based off my water usage?

After the Village received the 12-months of CWD water meter reads, the Village conducted further research and it was clear that there were significant water usage differences between the various types of businesses throughout the Village. More water usage means more utilization and stress to the public sanitary sewer collection system. That is, after the clean water is utilized by the consumer, the residual wastewater is collected by sink drains, floor drains, and toilets. The wastewater then flows into the public sanitary sewer collection system owned and operated by the Village.

For practicality and fairness of the different types of users, the more water used means the larger amount of wastewater through the public sanitary sewer collection system. A water usage-based system creates a more balanced and accurate method for matching each business's usage pattern in determining their quarterly sewer service and maintenance charge.

4. How can I ensure my sewer service and maintenance charge will be minimized?

Your quarterly sewer bill generated by the Village is based upon a 12-month average monthly water usage (see FAQ No. 2 above). It is unlikely that your sewer bill will change unless there is a significant change in use of the property (i.e. different type of business on the property). For sewer charge adjustment requests/inquiries, please refer to Sections 1042.14(d)&(e) of the Village of Northfield Codified Ordinances passed October 12, 2022 attached to this document.

More often than not, the most common source of abnormally high water/sewer bills is leaking plumbing fixtures inside the property. Being that your sewer service and maintenance charge is based-off of water usage obtained by the CWD through monthly water meter reads, it is important to check the internal plumbing for leaky toilets and/or leaky faucets. Excessive leaks will cause higher water usage hence increasing the amount of wastewater through the collection system.

5. When the City of Cleveland Division of Water increases their charge for water rates, will my sewer bill also increase?

No. If and when the CWD water rates are increased in the future, your sewer service and maintenance charge, established by the Village, will not change.

6. Will my sewer bill ever increase without a notice from the Village?

Beginning in 2023, your sewer bill may or may not have increased. An increase in your sewer bill is evident for commercial and industrial properties that now have sewer service and maintenance charges determined by your 12-month average water usage found in Table 1042.14-3.

For commercial and industrial properties (including motels, hotels, and business-related dormitories), your 2024 sewer bill will increase by 3% from your 2023 sewer bill and then increased by 3% each calendar year thereafter. You will be reminded of the next year's sewer charge increase in your fourth quarterly sewer bill.

For Lee Eaton Elementary School, its sewer bill will increase by 2% from its 2022 sewer charge and then increased by 2% each calendar year thereafter. A reminder of the next year's sewer charge increase will be included in your fourth quarterly sewer bill.

7. Can I appeal to have my assigned sewer service and maintenance charge reviewed and/or adjusted?

If you feel your quarterly sewer service and maintenance charges are not accurate, there is a process you can utilize found in Section 1042.14(d)&(e) of the Village of Northfield Codified Ordinances.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Tiffany Tompkins, Admin. Assistant / Admin. Clerk at 330.468.4360 or by e-mail to officeassistant@northfieldvillage-oh.gov.

VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD ORDINANCE NO. 2022-52
AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 1042.14 OF THE CODIFIED
ORDINANCES RELATING TO SEWER MAINTENANCE FEE CHARGES

WHEREAS, the Village sewer maintenance fees have not been increased or modified in the past ten years; and

WHEREAS, the Village has reviewed its sewer maintenance fee rate structure and determined that modifications need to be made to the commercial/industrial, motel/hotel/business related dormitory, and school rates in order to make the fees more equitable between users based upon the amount of flow placed into the system; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the above, the Village has revised its fee structure as set forth in this Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Village of Northfield, County of Summit, and State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That Council hereby amends Section 1042.14 of the Streets, Utilities, and Public Services Code, as is indicated in the attachment hereto that is incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. That the rest and remainder of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Northfield shall remain as presently drafted unless inconsistent herewith.

SECTION 3. That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this Ordinance were rendered in an open meeting of this Council and/or were in compliance with all legal requirements.


SECTION 4. That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the public peace, health, and welfare of the residents of the Village of Northfield for the reason that the Administration and Council desire to put the new rate structure in place as soon as possible so as to permit for an orderly transition to the new rates, and that this Ordinance shall take immediate effect upon its signature by the Mayor, or upon the expiration of time within which it may be disapproved by the Mayor, or upon its passage after its disapproval by the Mayor, as the case may be, pursuant to Village of Northfield Charter Section 4.11.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands this 12th day of October, 2022.


Renell Noack, President Pro-Tem of Council


Jennifer Domzalski, Mayor

Approved as to Legal Form.


Bradric T. Bryan, Director of Law

I, Jennifer Potvin, Clerk of Council of the Village of Northfield, Summit County, Ohio, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was duly and regularly passed by Council at a meeting held on the 12th day of October, 2022.


Jennifer Potvin, Clerk of Council

1042.14 CHARGES.

For sewerage service and maintenance provided by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and the Municipality, to any residential, school, commercial and industrial user within the Municipality, the charges shall be as follows:

(a) The Municipality shall charge the following rates:

(1) For residential use, each single home or each family unit or dwelling unit in a multifamily home or building, a sewerage service maintenance charge shall be levied at the rate of thirty-three dollars (\$33.00) per quarter, regardless of the number of connections made to the system serving the home or building.

(2) For motels, hotels and business related dormitories, a sewer service maintenance charge shall be levied for each family or dwelling unit on the premises at the rate of thirty dollars and eighty-seven cents (\$30.87) per quarter, regardless of the number of connections made to the system serving the home or building. Starting with 2023, the above rate shall increase by 3% each calendar year.

(3) For commercial use for each separate commercial user, unit, store, business establishment or professional office, a sewerage service charge shall be levied at the ~~rate of eighty-six dollars and seventy-seven cents (\$86.77)~~ applicable rate shown in Table 1042.14-3, per quarter, regardless of the number of connections made to the system servicing the commercial user, store, business establishment, professional office or building.

(4) For industrial use for each separate industrial user, unit, manufacturer or business establishment, a sewerage service charge shall be levied at the ~~following rates~~ applicable rate shown in Table 1042.14-3, per quarter, regardless of the number of connections made to the system serving the industrial user, unit, manufacturer, business establishment or building:.

- A. ~~Eighty-six dollars and seventy-seven cents (\$86.77), if its principal place of business is within the corporate limits of the Village; and~~
- B. ~~One hundred thirty dollars and fifteen cents (\$130.15), if its principal place of business is located outside of the corporate limits of the Village.~~

(c) ~~The rate changes~~ charges designated in this section shall become effective when ~~the Municipal sewer lines are tied in to the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District lines~~ a sewer line is connected to the property.

(d) If a commercial or industrial user's average water usage varies from its currently assigned average water usage category during the most recent 12 month consecutive period, the property owner may request an adjustment to their quarterly sewerage service and maintenance charge by making such request to the Village sewer billing agent and submitting the 12 most recent monthly water bills documenting their water usage for that period. If it is determined by the sewer billing agent that an adjustment is warranted based upon the submitted monthly water bills, such rate adjustment shall be effective as of the start of the first quarterly billing period encompassed by the submitted bills. If the commercial or industrial user is not satisfied with the decision of the Village sewer billing agent in response to its adjustment request, the user may appeal the sewer billing agent's decision to Village Council within 30 days of the date of the sewer billing agent's decision. In the event such an appeal is filed, Village Council shall hear the appeal within 45 days of the date of the filing of the appeal.

(e) New businesses may request the sewer billing agent to place them in a different water usage category based upon their expected average monthly water usage amount for that type and size of business. If the commercial or industrial user is not satisfied with the decision of the Village sewer billing agent in response to its adjustment request, the user may appeal the sewer billing agent's decision to Village Council within 30 days of the date of the sewer billing agent's decision. In the event such an appeal is filed, Village Council shall hear the appeal within 45 days of the date of the filing of the appeal. After any new business has been in operation for 12 full months, a review of the commercial or industrial user's average monthly water usage over the past 12 months shall be made. Based upon that review, the average monthly water usage billing category for the business shall be adjusted, if necessary, and any warranted billing adjustments for the past 12 months shall be made on the next sewer bill.

(f) Residential sewer maintenance fee invoices that are paid in full for the entire calendar year by January 31 of the year in question shall be entitled to a \$12.00 discount on the amount owed for that entire calendar year.