City residents will get 1-percent drop

• Farmington residents will enjoy a 1 percent decrease in their water and sewer bills. "Wo're pleased to pass along a decrease to residents," said Bill Richards, assistant city manag-

At the Menday night city council meeting, Richards explained that the savings atomated from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, which raised water actes by 4.42 percent decreased sower rates by 5 percent. Most of southeast Michigan municipalities get their water from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, Richards said.

Water is measured by units, which equal 1,000 gallons. The average Farmington household uses about 120,000 gallons per

Director of Public Services Kevin Gushman estimates the average homeowner will pay about \$1.50 less each quarter, or \$6 per year.

"It's not a lot, but it's better than an increase," Gushman said.



units, which equal 1,000 gailons. The average Farmington household uses about 120,000 gallons per year. Most of southeast Michigan municipalities get their water from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.

WATER AND **SEWER RATES**









Rates from page A1

account to cut that in half.

McRae asked whether lowering the rate would only postpone the inevitable.

"How long can we keep doing this and not affect our capital budget?" he asked Director of Public Works Tom Biasell.

Blasell said the interest income was designed to offset rate increases. Figuring rates is always a balancing act, he said, and the goal is to keep them on an even keel.

"This is money our citizens paid in, and we're rebating it back to them," commented Barnett.

One citizen felt she's still paying too much because of a minimum use charge on quarterly billings. Kathy McRae said she and her husband are charged every quarter for water they don't use because they nover meet the minimum of 16,000 gallons despite regular water use.

"It think you should take another look at what the minimum is," she said.

According to Biasell, the DPW had

According to Biasell, the DPW had

looked at the issue a number of times ever the past two years. While it's possible to pull out all of the fixed costs and set a rate for just that part of the bill, plus a usage charge, he said the lower-volume users would end up paying even more than the current minimum.

Barnett questioned an increase in water loss, which is the difference between how much water is pumped into the city and the total of individual readings. Drain Commission Engineer Doug Buchholz said water main breaks, fires and leaks in the system contributed to the 14 percent loss, which is much higher than the average estimate of five percent. Last year, he said, the city experienced 131 water main breaks, which is higher than cormal.

"It's partly the age of the system," he said, adding most of the breaks occurred in the southeast, where older pipes are made of cast iron.

"Farmington Hills is fairly fortunate

made of cast iron.

"Farmington Hills is fairly fortunate

compared to some of the older cities that lose a significant amount of their water and they don't know where it's going." Biasell pointed out. "Our system is fairly tight, but there are growing problems." A Master Watermain Plan currently under way will evaluate problem areas, he added.

While water rates increased, sewer rates dropped by about three percent. However, Barnett expressed concern over a 20 percent increase in debt service, which Buchholz, Biasell and Barrott couldn't fully explain.

For that reason, the councilwoman voted "no" to the rate change.

"It's not that I don't want to give every-body a decrease," she said. "There's just not a lot of time to answer these ques-tions."

The new water and sewer rates will take effect July 1.

la-z-boy furniture galleries®



Enjoy storewide savings, plus choose one of three great bonus offers during this event!



Take an extra 15% off*

(all in-stock merchandise)



We pay your 6% sales tax*



One year free financing*





Rocker Recliners from \$249

Massage Recliners from \$499

Sofas from \$699 Reclining Sofas from \$799

NOY! Under the Water lower at 12 Oats Malitzes) 349-3700 STERLING REIGHTS Service Direc at Labelde Malites() 747-1720
WARREN 12 Min Rd. West of Mound Listol 347-2400 TAYLOR Curries Rd. as Southland Malityzes 227-1750
ANN ARBOR Service Drive at Enterwood Malityzes 255-2600 CANTON Ford Rd. East of 8-725 [734] 981-1000 CLEARANCE CENTER Next to see Contra

www.lzbdetroit.com

