

ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION ON
TOWN OF SAGUACHE FACEBOOK PAGE
AND SAGUACHE CRESCENT

LET'S TALK WATER AND SEWER

December 2016 – As our Town moves forward with its Water Augmentation Plan and Sewer Repair/Replacement Project, it is important that everyone participate. I wanted to take the time to share some numbers and important information about these life-sustaining and public health services to our families and neighbors.

What are our expectations as citizens of Saguache? That when we turn on our faucets clean, safe water comes out and our drains work? That when we flush our toilets the mess goes away?

What are we currently paying for these services that we so take for granted?

Historic Town water use: In 2010-2011 the Town pumped 338 acre feet or 110,365,733 gallons of water. This was prior to enactment of water restrictions and you can see the difference in usage as in 2011-2012 the town pumped 238 acre feet or 77,585,123 gallons, and we continued to see a savings through the current year 2015-2016 when as of October, the Town has pumped 211 acre feet or 68,754,610 gallons. Our goal under the Town's Water Augmentation Plan is that we never pump more than 202 acre feet per year. So, you can see we are getting closer, but still need a last stretch of effort to meet and maintain our goals.

The 2015-2016 number averages 233,541 gallons of water per day or 677 gallons per account/residence per day as we currently have 345 water taps. At our current water rate of \$25.50 per month, this results in a cost to each account/residence of 84 cents per day or .0012 per gallon. Aren't we fortunate that water and sewer systems put in place in the 1960's have carried us this far?

I can hear the intake of breath at the audacity of saying each residence uses 677 gallons per day. Everyone claiming they don't use that much water. I agree, some do and some don't, and there are also the larger users such as businesses, schools and the county. However, without water meters, we have no way of determining these amounts specifically nor ensuring that each household and business pays for their actual use.

Looking in the face of a \$2.2 million dollar sewer repair/replacement project, we will be faced with many years of debt servicing at the same time we are being grateful for all of the grant funding we can find.

Where does this money come from? What do we do? Increase rates? Tighten water restrictions? Install water meters?

The answer, of course, will be some combination of all the above. The Town's Finance Committee consisting of Mayor Greg Terrell, Trustee Wyoma Hansen, and myself Town Administrator Pam Fye, will

be meeting over the next 30 days to come up with a 10-year plan to present to the Town Board and Citizens in January, 2017.

We are not alone. Crumbling infrastructure is forcing repairs from coast to coast, with costs more than doubling in every 1 of 4 localities. A unique look at costs for a diverse mix of water suppliers representing every state found that these resources, long taken for granted, will continue to become more costly for millions of Americans. Rates haven't crested yet because of the huge costs to upgrade or repair pipes.

Don't forget to check our website at www.townofsaguache.org for updates and meeting agendas/minutes. Our web page will be receiving a facelift in the near future. Additionally, we will be posting all important information on our Facebook page.

It is my pleasure to serve the Town of Saguache.

Pam Fye, Town Administrator