

CITY OF WATKINS



2023 FALL NEWSLETTER



This Newsletter is posted on the City of Watkins' web page at www.cityofwatkins.com as well as other informational items and the events calendar.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS MAILED AS A SERVICE TO ALL RESIDENTS TO LET YOU KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE CITY. PLEASE READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY SO YOU ARE AWARE OF SOME BASIC INFORMATION, RULES AND REGULATIONS. THANK YOU.

Water/Sewer Utility Policy. The city bills monthly for water/sewer usage. **Bills are always due on the 25th of each month**, (no matter if it is a holiday, Saturday, or Sunday) or any day prior to this date. **PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE PAYMENT STUB WITH YOUR PAYMENT SO YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE PROPERLY CREDITED. If the bill is not paid by the 25th of the month, a late fee is added to the bill, so please pay on time. Any delinquent water/sewer bill is subject to disconnection if not paid by the due date. A \$200.00 reconnection fee must be paid before water can be turned on again.** If reconnected after hours, an additional \$50.00 will be charged. The City does accept credit, debit, and prepaid cards for payment of water bills. There is a link on the City website home page for the credit card site. You can also stop in at City Hall or call in and staff can assist. There is a fee for the use of a credit, debit, or prepaid card.

Winter Parking Regulations:

Snow Removal and Parking; Fines. (B) No person shall park a vehicle in the Central Business District on Central Avenue between the hours of 2:30 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., November 1 to April 1. Vehicles found parked or abandoned in the Central Business district on Central Avenue in violation of this provision shall be cited by the Sheriff's Department. The first offense shall be a \$25 fine; the second offense shall be a \$50 fine; recurring offenses shall be a \$100 fine. Owners of vehicles so cited shall pay the fine to the City Clerk. If the fines are not paid within ten (10) days of the date of the citation, the violation may be prosecuted as a petty misdemeanor. **(C)** On all other city streets, a parking ban shall go into effect at 12:00 a.m. when a night snow (one inch or more) occurs. This parking ban shall remain in effect until the streets are plowed and cleared of snow. The first offense shall be a \$25 fine; the second offense shall be \$50 fine; recurring offenses shall be a \$100 fine.

Please pull your garbage cans back from the sidewalk and street right-of-way once they are emptied as a courtesy to everyone using the sidewalks and also so they do not obstruct snow plowing/removal.

Land Use Permits are required in the City for all permanent and non-permanent accessory structures. If you are unsure if a permit is needed, please call City Hall at 764-6400 before starting a project. Permits are also required for decks, pools, fences, additions, all new construction, moving in a structure of any kind, etc. Please plan ahead for any projects. The city has up to 60 days to issue a permit. **Penalty Fee – The penalty fee in all Zoning Districts for starting work before an approved Land Use Permit is obtained shall be four (4) times the Permit Fee.** This fee would be in addition to the Land Use Permit Fee.

If you plan to reside, reroof, install new windows or replace doors in your home, you do not need a permit for that. **The City does allow metal roofing on residential properties, however, be aware that only standing seam metal roofing systems are allowed. If you install anything other than a standing seam metal roofing system, you will have to remove it.**

Reminder – A & A Recycling has provided a recycling container free of charge for residents of the city to dispose of their recyclable products i.e., household appliances, air conditioners, water heaters and other items. **Televisions and computer monitors are not accepted.** Please contact City Hall at 764-6400 for an appointment time to drop off your recyclables or if you have questions as to what is accepted.

Anyone bringing leaves or brush to the brush site MUST take all bags and/or containers back with them. PCA regulations do not allow bags and/or containers to be left at the brush site. If the City finds bags or containers at the brush site, it will discontinue this service or an extra fee will be added to the water bills to cover the additional expense incurred by the Maintenance Department to dispose of these bags or containers.

Fire Prevention. The burning of leaves will only be permitted from September 15 through November 15. No burning shall take place until a burning permit is issued from designated members of the Watkins Fire Department. Permits shall be for a period of no longer than two weeks. Burning of rubbish, trash, or other material is prohibited. Violation of the above Ordinance shall be a misdemeanor which will be assessed a penalty.

The City has adopted a Right of Way Ordinance, a Demolition and Wrecking of Buildings Ordinance, and a new Nuisance Ordinance. There have also been amendments to the Watkins City Code and Watkins Zoning Ordinance. These can be found on the city's website.

PERMITS ARE REQUIRED TO OPERATE A MOTORIZED GOLF CART WITHIN THE CITY OF WATKINS. A Permit Application may be obtained at City Hall. The Permit fee is \$10.00 and expires 3 years from date of issuance. Any person in violation of Section 70.03 of the Municipal Code of the City of Watkins, MN (Motorized Golf Carts) shall be penalized according to Section 70.99 of the same code.

House Numbers. All residents/property owners are asked to post your house number outside so delivery drivers, emergency vehicles, etc. can find your property.

ANNUAL NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS. Bills can pile up just like snow. However, the Minnesota Cold Weather rule is designed to protect people who may have difficulty paying their utility bills in the winter. The Minnesota Cold Weather rule applies from October 1 to April 30. The rule, established by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, states that your utility cannot disconnect your utility service affecting your home's primary source of heat during the winter if the customer meets the following requirements:

1. Utility disconnect would affect the customer's primary heat source;
2. The customer has declared inability to pay on forms provided by the utility (Note: Customers receiving "any form of public assistance," including energy assistance are deemed to have qualified for inability to pay status);
3. The household income of the customer is less than 50 % of the state median income level, as documented by the customer to the utility; and
4. The customer enters into and makes reasonable timely payments under an agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

If you have difficulty paying your utility bill, local agencies may be able to provide payment assistance. The State Department of Human Services recommends you call the county in which you live. If you know you are going to have difficulty paying your utility bills, please contact the utility company ahead of time to try to work out a payment schedule.

PETS. Owners are responsible for their pets. As the owner or keeper of an animal, you are responsible to keep the animal under your control **at all times**. Invisible fencing doesn't guarantee that your dog won't breach the barrier. The animal must still be on a leash outside and **not able to reach people passing by**. **ALL** animals are required to be current on all vaccinations. Please don't allow your dog or cat to become a nuisance to your neighbors by running at large, pooping/urinating on neighbor's property, or constantly barking. When walking your dog, you are responsible for

picking up any droppings they leave and a fine of \$10.00 will be enforced if you are caught not picking up after your pet. Please keep your own property clean of pet litter as well.

Tree trimming – Public Works will be trimming trees that are blocking the view of traffic at intersections and those too close to the surface of a sidewalk or street. If you would rather trim yourself, please contact City Hall by October 16th.

CodeRED Public Notification. CodeRED is an emergency notification service developed specifically for local public safety personnel. It's used to alert residents and businesses of time-sensitive information, emergencies, or urgent notifications. You can choose whether you want to be alerted via landline, cell phone, text message, email, or a combination of those methods. Alerts could concern chemical spills/HAZMAT, evacuation notices, missing persons, boil water notices, power outages, street closures, police activities, etc. If you'd like to sign up for the CodeRED Notification system, or would like to confirm that you are enrolled, please contact City Hall.

Upcoming City Hall office hours: City Hall **will be closed** Monday, October 9, Indigenous Peoples Day; Friday, November 10, Veterans Day (observed); Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24, Thanksgiving; Monday, December 25, Christmas Day and Monday, January 1st, New Year's Day.

City Hall office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. City Hall phone number is (320) 764-6400; fax number is (320) 764-6401; email: info@watkinsmn.city.