

CITY OF WATKINS
BOX 306
WATKINS, MN 55389

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SPRING NEWSLETTER
2024



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 \$75.00 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 City Hall or call in and staff can assist. There is a fee for the use of a credit, debit, or prepaid card.

The city asks all residents to check your water meter on a regular basis to be sure it is not leaking. If you see water dripping, please contact City Hall to schedule an appointment with Public Works to make the repair. Also, please remember not to flush disposable wipes. Even if they say "flushable", disposable wipes will clog pipes. **Prevent costly backups and places wipes in trash - Flush only toilet paper – NO OTHER PRODUCTS.**

Watkins 2023 Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report is available online. This report can be viewed at http://www.cityofwatkins.com/uploads/2/2/1/7/22172496/ccr_report_pws_1470010_2023.pdf. A paper copy of this report is available upon request.

Reminder – All signs (garage sale, campaign, etc.) must stay off city street right-of-way and state highway right-of-way.

Land Use Permits – If you plan to do any building or additions to existing structures, erecting fences, moving in a structure, etc., please contact City Hall for information and permits. **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.

Land use permits are not required to reside, reroof, install new windows or install new doors in your home. **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.**

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.

Swimming Pools. All outdoor swimming pools shall be completely enclosed by a security fence or wall at least 4 ft. but not more than 6 ft. high and be located no less than 4 ft. from the edge of the pool. The bottom of the fence or wall shall be no higher than 4 inches above the surface of the ground. Fence openings or points of entry to the pool area shall be equipped with self-closing/self-latching lockable gates. Above ground pools with sides or attached fences which create a barrier at least four (4) feet in height do not require an additional fence or barrier. Any entrance to the pool must be secured with a self-closing and self-latching lockable gate. A **Land Use Permit** is required for all pools & fences.

Filling swimming pools – Anyone wanting a pool filled by the Watkins Fire Department will need to contact City Hall during regular business hours to make arrangements. Please do not contact a member of the Fire Department directly. The cost to fill a pool for a City Resident is \$25.00 plus current cost of water per 1,000 gallons. If the pool doesn't require the estimated and paid for amount, the extra monies will be applied to the resident's utility bill. Payment for the pool fill will be due before it can be filled. Pools will only be filled by the Fire Department on the 1st and 3rd Monday evening of the month. If you plan to fill your pool yourself, be aware that your water bill may increase substantially.

Parking Regulations. (A) No recreational vehicle, camper, travel trailer, camper top, boat, boat trailer or motor home shall be stored or parked for more than 48 hours on any city street. Provided, however, that during such 48-hour period, such vehicle shall not be occupied as living quarters. No automobile shall be parked for more than 72 hours on any city street or parking lot.

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 Public Works Department to dispose of these bags or containers. THIS IS FOR CITY RESIDENTS ONLY.

The City is asking all property owners to help keep the City storm sewer system from getting clogged by not blowing any grass clippings, leaves or dirt into the street. Your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Grass clippings and yard waste pick up is provided by the city as a free service to city residents. Grass clippings and leaves must be in bags weighing no more than 30 pounds. Brush, sticks, and small branches must be tied in bundles no longer than 4 feet long and must not weigh more than 30 pounds. No boxes of brush material will be accepted. Brush materials not complying with the above rules will not be picked up. If you have a large quantity of brush to pick up, prior arrangements must be made with the city and a rate of \$100.00 per hour (1 hour minimum) for truck and equipment use will apply. **If you wish to haul your own brush material, arrangements must be made with City Hall AT LEAST ONE DAY IN ADVANCE by calling 764-6400.**

The burning of leaves is only permitted from April 10 through May 15 and September 15 through November 15 of each year. 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.

Water from Sump Pumps. (Quoted from Watkins City Code of Ordinances §51.37 (B)) It shall be **unlawful to discharge or cause to be discharged into the municipal sewer system**, either directly or indirectly, any roof, storm, surface or ground water, or water from any type of private drainage system, or **discharge from sump pumps**, and all similar kinds of water discharge of whatever kind or nature. Water discharged from a water air conditioning system may not be discharged into the municipal sewer system, unless a permit allowing such discharge is issued by the Council. **The additional cost to treat this water may be passed on in rate increases to all City residents and businesses.**

Watkins Swimming Pool – The pool is scheduled to open June 1st at 1 p.m. weather permitting. The pool will be closed July 4th and August 3rd. The pool may close for the season in mid to late August at City Council discretion.

Swimming Lessons – Lessons will be offered at the pool this summer. Lesson sign-up will be Saturday, May 4th from 10 to 11 a.m. at Village Hall. Walk-in and phone registrations at City Hall will start May 6th. The schedule will be posted to the city’s website, the pool Facebook page [Watkins Outdoor Swimming Pool | Watkins MN | Facebook](#) and city Facebook page [Watkins Minnesota | Facebook](#). All registrations will be on a first come, first served basis and payment will be due at time of registration. No exceptions will be made.

Pet Reminder - Please clean up after your pet(s) while you are walking them, whether on property of others or public property. Please keep your own property clean of pet litter as well. Please be a responsible pet owner and considerate neighbor and don’t allow your dog to bark excessively while it is outside and abide by the City Ordinance. Thank you.

Please pull your garbage and recycling can back from the sidewalk and street right-of-way once they are emptied as a courtesy to everyone using the sidewalks and streets.

There is a vacancy on the Planning Commission Board. Interested persons can pick up an application from City Hall.

If you have any questions or comments for the city, office hours are from 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

ANNUAL NOTICE – For Military Personnel – Minn. Stat. § 325E.028

Minnesota law requires that customers and utilities make utility payment arrangements for military service personnel in the following situation. If a member of a household has been issued orders into active duty, deployment, or change in duty station and the residential customer meets specific income criteria, the Watkins City utility must not disconnect the utility service of that qualifying residential customer due to nonpayment.

An application for a utility payment agreement must include copies of income statements and proof of military orders as described in the law. The Watkins City utility may shut off utility service for nonpayment if an application does not include the required copies of income statements and proof of military orders as required by Minn. Stat. § 325E.028.

If you would like a copy of this law, please contact the city utility at 320-764-6400.

The City Council amended the Parking Ordinance. Please read the following excerpt so you are aware of the new regulations regarding snow removal and parking.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 72 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF WATKINS PERTAINING TO PARKING REGULATIONS

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATKINS, MEEKER COUNTY, MINNESOTA, ORDAINS:

Section 1. Section 72.02 (Snow Removal and Parking; Fines) of the Municipal Code of the City of Watkins, Minnesota is hereby amended to read as follows:

(A) For the purpose of this section, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

STREET. Any street, avenue, alley, or other public way in the city.

VEHICLE. Any self-propelled motor vehicle or other vehicle on wheels which would ordinarily travel on public streets.

(B) WINTER PARKING.

1. 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., from 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 Meeker County 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 State of Minnesota. If the fines are not paid within ten days of the date of the citation, the violation may be prosecuted as a petty misdemeanor.

(C) DECLARATION OF A SNOW EMERGENCY; PARKING PROHIBITED.

- 1. The City may declare a snow emergency to exist in the City whenever snow falls to a depth of two (2) inches or more. The emergency shall continue in effect for a period of twenty-four (24) hours or until terminated sooner by the City if conditions permit.**
- 2. The City of Watkins web site, City of Watkins Facebook page, Code Red, and City of Watkins Digital Community Sign may be used as a means to notify residents that a snow emergency is declared; however, the notification shall be a service aid only and not a duty on the part of city officials.**
- 3. Parking Prohibited. During a snow emergency it shall be unlawful to park on either side of a city street.**
- 4. Vehicles in Violation. Any motor vehicle found in violation of this section shall constitute a public hazard and an obstruction of traffic and may be immediately removed and impounded by any police officer or person/entity designated by the City Council.**
- 5. Following an impoundment, the vehicle shall be surrendered only to the duly identified owner, or the owner's agent upon payment of the cost of towing and storage. Any damage occasioned to any towed vehicles by the towing operations shall be the responsibility of the owner or operator of the vehicle. No liability for damages shall be imposed against, nor shall any damage be assumed by the City. In addition to impoundment any person violating the provision may be charged with a petty misdemeanor**