

CITY OF WATKINS
BOX 306
WATKINS, MN 55389

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2021 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.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay for home heating and water costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households.

EAP is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grants are:

- For renters or homeowners
- For households with income at or below 60 percent of the state median income
- Based on Energy cost, household size, and income

Services may include:

- Payment of energy bills
- Payment of water/wastewater bills
- Help with utility disconnections or fuel deliveries
- Education on efficient and safe use of energy
- Advocacy with energy suppliers and human service providers
- Repair or replacement of homeowners' broken heating systems

EAP eligibility is based on the three most recent months of income.

Contact United Community Action Partnership for an application at 320-235-0850 or 1-800-992-1710, Willmar, MN.

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.

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.

Fire Prevention. The burning of leaves will only be permitted from September 15 through November 15 this fall. 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.

City of Watkins Planning and Zoning Ordinance regarding:

Parking & Storage of Any Vehicles without current license plates or unlicensed must be stored in an enclosed building. Parking of recreational vehicles/automobiles etc. in the front yard setback area of a residential zone is prohibited with the exception of on a paved driveway. Boats and trailers, less than 20 feet in length, must be stored in the rear yard and be placed a minimum of at least 10 feet from the property line.

Water/Sewer Utility Policy. The City bills monthly for water/sewer usage and **these bills are due on the 25th of each month, (no matter if it is a holiday, Saturday, or Sunday)** or any day prior to this date. **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 after hours an additional \$50.00 will be charged. PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE PAYMENT STUB WITH YOUR PAYMENT TO INSURE YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE PROPERLY CREDITED.

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 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 which are required to be on a leash and on your property. Please don't allow your dog 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.

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 15th.

Reminder of Code Red Public Notification Sign Up Form. Please complete and return the included form to City Hall. Disregard completing the form if you have already submitted one to the City.

Upcoming City Hall office hours: City Hall **will be closed** Monday, October 11, Columbus Day; Thursday, November 11, Veterans Day observance; Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26 for the Thanksgiving holiday; Friday, December 24 for the Christmas Holiday and Friday, December 31 for the New Year Holiday.

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.