

**CITY OF WATKINS**  
**BOX 306**  
**WATKINS, MN 55389**

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**SPRING NEWSLETTER**  
2020



This Newsletter is posted on the City of Watkins' web page at [www.cityofwatkins.com](http://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.**

**COVID-19: There are several links on the city's website for residents and businesses for programs/assistance available during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please go to [www.cityofwatkins.com](http://www.cityofwatkins.com) home page.**

**Until further notice, City Hall will remain closed until the state of emergency is no longer in place. Please call City Hall at 320-764-6400 if you have any questions or email at [cityofwatkins@gmail.com](mailto:cityofwatkins@gmail.com). Please check the city's website for information you might find helpful during this time.**

**Census 2020 – If you haven't completed the census yet, please do so.**

**NOTICE – The State of MN approved an increase in the drinking water service connection fee from \$6.36 to \$9.72. This fee will be on your June water bill. This is a State mandated fee to fund activities of MN Department of Health's Drinking Water Protection Program related to maintaining compliance with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. This fee amount has not changed since 2005.**

**Public Notification form. We have enclosed a form for those residents who have not returned one yet or are new to the city. Please complete and return. The city would like to get 100% of its residents signed up for this.**

**Water/Sewer Utility Bills:** The City bills monthly for water/sewer usage and **these bills are still due on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month**, (no matter if it is a Holiday, Saturday, or Sunday) or any day prior to this date even during the local emergency due to the COVID-19 health pandemic. The city has temporarily suspended shutting off water services for past due accounts. The city has also temporarily suspended late fees on past due accounts. The city strongly encourages residents to continue to pay bills on time. You can make payments as often as you like for whatever amount you can afford. Once the city declares that an emergency no longer exists, the city will begin issuing shut off notices again and late fees will be reinstated. **PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE PAYMENT STUB WITH YOUR PAYMENT SO YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE PROPERLY CREDITED.**

**Watkins 2019 Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report** is available online. This report can be viewed at [www.cityofwatkins.com/uploads/2/2/1/7/22172496/watkins\\_2019\\_drinking\\_water\\_report.pdf](http://www.cityofwatkins.com/uploads/2/2/1/7/22172496/watkins_2019_drinking_water_report.pdf). A paper copy of this report is available upon request.

**FLUSH ONLY TOILET PAPER – NO OTHER PAPER PRODUCTS.....**paper towels, napkins, and even “flushable” wipes are not going to break down in the sanitary sewer system. If you are flushing those paper products down your toilet, you are just asking for trouble. If your pipes get blocked, you will likely have raw sewage backing up into your basement and your home. That is a public health risk and an expensive remediation. Homeowners are responsible for the sewer lines from their house until it meets the city’s sewer main under the street.

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.

\*\*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.** \*\*

**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. 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 continues to find 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.**

**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 provided by the City will begin in May on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month until early November. Please have your brush materials and clippings properly bagged or bundled curb side by 7:00 a.m. 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. This is a free service offered to the citizens of Watkins. 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 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.**

If you are planning on selling your home, please notify City Hall of the closing date and when it is final so a final reading of the water meter can be done to prepare the final bill for you. Also inform the new occupants that they need to contact City Hall to complete an application for water/sewer service.

**Watkins Swimming Pool – The pool will not open for the 2020 season due to the COVID-19 crisis.** This was a very difficult decision to make but the city believes it is the best for all concerned. Thank you for your understanding in this matter and support of our decision.

**Animals – Reminder.** All dogs and cats are required to be licensed annually (August 1<sup>st</sup>). License fee is \$5.00. Owners must provide proof of current vaccinations when purchasing a license. **The City again asks all residents to please clean up after your pets while you are walking them and keep your own property clean as well as cleaning up after them whether on property of others or public property.** Please be a responsible and considerate pet owner and abide by the City Ordinance.

**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 streets.

\*\* (Quoted from the City of Watkins/Planning and Zoning Ordinances.) \*\*

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: [cityofwatkins@gmail.com](mailto:cityofwatkins@gmail.com).

## **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.