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THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2011

Full house in Middleburg Heights hears proposed rate details



Hundreds of residents assembled at the Middleburg Heights Community Center last night for the fifth of six public meetings to present the Sewer District's proposed [2012-2016 rate schedule](#). A 15-minute presentation was followed by more than one hour of questions from the audience, many regarding Federal funding, our proposed [Stormwater Management Program](#), [Project Clean Lake](#), and billing.

Mayor and 17-year [Sewer District Trustee](#) Gary Starr opened the comment session with a public statement, and more than a dozen customers asked specific questions about the proposed changes which include an elimination of the District's minimum charge, an increased [Homestead program](#) savings, and a new crisis voucher program.

The presentation is available as a [PDF download online](#), and all of the questions were documented and will be presented to Trustees next month when the [2012-2016 rate schedule](#) is placed before them for a vote.

Our @neorsd Twitter account tweeted the discussion, tagging its points with #rates2012:

Twitter thread: #rates2012

@mborcherds
RT @wallywaterdrop: #rates2012 public meeting in Middleburg Hts may have this room filled tonight. Starts at 7. <http://twitpic.com/4tetzd>

@wallywaterdrop

Filing in. #rates2012 <http://twitpic.com/4tfatl>

@neorsd

Deputy Director and Director of Finance about to get started as attendees take their seats. #rates2012

@neorsd

Thanks to Middleburg Hts Mayor #garystarr for offering the facility #rates2012

@neorsd

Setting the stage: Water Department and #neorsd are different agencies, We're here to talk about sewer rates, not water rates. #rates2012

@neorsd

Sidenote 2: Tonight's presentation is available as a PDF at <http://neorsd.org/rates> #rates2012

@wallywaterdrop

Full house. #rates2012 <http://twitpic.com/4tfecp>

@neorsd

Sidenote: Dep Director is explaining #neorsd responsibilities. You can find them at <http://neorsd.org/about> #rates2012

@neorsd

Director of Finance is reviewing current rates: 1MCF minimum charge (1000 cubic feet of water, about 7400 gallons) #rates2012

@neorsd

Why are #rates2012 going up? Rising O&M costs, reducing sewage overflows to environment are key drivers.

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I know we've tweeted this before but it bears repeating: #rates2012 eliminates the MCF minimum charge.

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Current homestead reduction for qualified customers is 33%. #rates2012 includes an increase to 40%.

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If you qualify for Cleveland Water homestead/affordability reduction, you qualify for #neorsd and vice versa. #rates2012

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\$52 suburban rate, plus \$5.85 base fee, but no more minimum charge. If you use .5 MCF, you pay for .5 MCF. No more 1 MCF minimum. #rates2012

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Small users (.63 MCF or less) will see biggest benefit in #rates2012, about a \$10 reduction per quarter compared to current fees.

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Next steps: One more #rates2012 public meeting, Trustees vote this summer, billing system changes this fall, first bill would be Jan 2012.

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Mayor #garystarr is speaking as the opening comment following the presentation. #rates2012

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Mayor #garystarr called for a one-year moratorium on sewer rate increases in Nov. It was defeated by trustees. #rates2012

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Q: Runoff from roofs and driveways, will we be charged for that? A: Stormwater prgm is in litigation and not a topic tonight. #rates2012

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Question from audience re: \$3 billion figure

referenced by #garystarr. \$3 bil figure is requirement from EPA. #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: Did EPA perform cost-benefit analysis? A: EPA performed affordability analysis. #rates2012

@neorsd
Customer concerned about Cleveland Water billing. We have devoted resources to make improvements to their new billing system. #rates2012

@neorsd
Portion of #rates2012 program is intended for \$3 billion 25-yr CSO control program, but it is not the sole reason.

@neorsd
Q: How was 4.5 billion gallons of combined sewer overflow calculated? It's a 2005 figure based on regional studies #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: Why are water and sewer assessed on same bill if agencies are separate? Consolidated billing saves money #rates2012

@neorsd
Many #rates2012 attendees have water questions. Here are two helpful numbers: Cleveland Water 216.664.3130 and #neorsd 216.881.8247

@neorsd
More CSO control questions. \$3 bil Project Clean Lake is a result of negotiations with EPA since 2004. Trustees adopted in Nov. #rates2012

@neorsd
Comment from audience: #neorsd "did a fantastic job negotiating with EPA." #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: What kind of benefits are we getting from combined sewer overflow control? #rates2012

@neorsd
A: After storms, bacteria levels rise in waterways for 1-2 day period. Combined sewer overflows are major source of bacteria. #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: What about past corruption? A: FBI subpoenaed 180,000 documents, Schatz is in Federal prison, big reforms in 2008. #newday #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: How did Lorain join the #neorsd? A: Lorain County Commissioners approached us to join #neorsd. #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: Are we using vacant land to store rainwater? Isn't it cheaper? A: It can be, it's part of our plan to consider such options. #rates2012

@neorsd
Our CSO consent decree appendices 3 and 4 detail #green infrastructure opportunities. #rates2012
Decree is at <http://neorsd.org/cleanlake>

@neorsd
Vacant land re-use + #green infrastructure can help us to eliminate gray infrastructure costs in the future. #rates2012

@wallywaterdrop
Anyone following the #rates2012 stream at @neorsd?

@neorsd
Q: You proposed a crisis voucher program. What's the basis? A: Proposed program was based on similar programs across country. #rates2012

@wallywaterdrop
RT @neorsd: Q: R U using vacant land to store rainwater? Cheaper? A: It can be, it's part of our plan to consider such options. #rates2012

@neorsd
Q: Shouldn't fed gov't be paying for some of this? A: We lobby for federal grants + support, and occasionally do receive grants. #rates2012

@neorsd
Mayot #garystarr closing Q: What are you doing with these comments? A: We will present recommendations to Trustees in June. #rates2012

@neorsd
All of the #rates2012 questions from all six meetings are being documented for presentation to Trustees as part of recommendation.

@Trog_RPC
RT @neorsd: Mayot #garystarr closing Q: What are you doing with these comments? A: We will present recommendations to Trustees in June. #rates2012

POSTED BY NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT AT 10:26 AM 

LABELS: [GARY STARR](#), [PROJECT CLEAN LAKE](#), [PUBLIC](#), [RATES](#), [RATES2012](#), [STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM](#), [TWITTER](#)

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