

FY24 Stormwater Fee Increase Request Summary

The Stormwater and Environmental Services Division is proposing to increase stormwater management utility fees in FY24. Stormwater fees have not been adjusted since their adoption in FY17. An increase is needed to:

- Keep pace with inflation;
- Fund a new position within the Stormwater and Environmental Services Division;
- Fund equipment needs for stormwater infrastructure maintenance;
- Fund appropriate percentage of Public Works personnel dedicated to stormwater infrastructure maintenance.

Justification for New Stormwater Technician Position

Workload for existing Stormwater and Environmental Division staff has increased significantly. Primary reasons for increased workload include:

- Third party analysis of the stormwater program indicated a few “gaps” in compliance with the town’s stormwater permit;
- New development since 2017 has resulted in 43 new stormwater control measures (SCM), bringing the total within the town’s jurisdiction to 132; each SCM must have an annual inspection report reviewed by town staff and includes follow up inspections by town staff; each SCM must be inspected by town staff at least once every 5 years;
- New development has increased the number of town streets which contain stormwater infrastructure which must be inspected periodically;
- Public assistance requests have increased significantly, especially in support of new homeowner associations;
- Stormwater staff have increased their involvement in regional efforts such as the Upper Neuse River Base Association (UNRBA) and Clean Water Education Partnership (CWEP);
- Began implementing the Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA), a joint compliance program through the UNRBA to meet the required Stage 1 Falls Lake Rules for stormwater.

Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance

The Public Works Division operates and maintains town-owned stormwater infrastructure. The division also supports various water quality and watershed improvement projects implemented by Stormwater and Environmental Services. As such the stormwater utility fees currently fund 1 FTE in Public Works. To improve level of service and meet stormwater permit requirements, additional needs and considerations include:

- Jet-vac truck for cleaning catch basins and pipes;
- Additional backhoe for ditch/swale and other stormwater related work;
- Evaluation of number of FTEs dedicated to stormwater infrastructure maintenance.

Analysis and Rate Model

Town stormwater staff is completing an analysis and rate model to determine recommendations for the FY24 budget. General findings and recommendations of that analysis include:

- Stormwater utility fees have a 98% collection rate;
- Stormwater Technician is planned as an entry level, primarily field position, salary grade 6;
- Proposed FY24 budget used in analysis includes new position rate, PC, supplies, etc. and increased collection cost based on increased fees;
- Recommend keeping residential fees as a flat, annual rate;
- Recommend adding a sixth tier to the non-residential rates to address properties with significantly higher impervious surface.

Next Steps

Town staff anticipates the following items as “next steps” in determining proposed stormwater fee increases:

- Receive input and direction from the town board;
- Benchmark other local municipalities current stormwater utility fees;
- Update rate model and analysis as necessary based on FY22 financial information, updated costs, etc.