

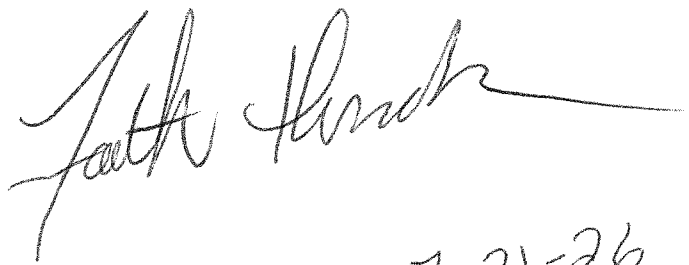
Community Concerns

Water is Life

No American, let alone citizen of Pipestone, should ever be disconnected from a source of something necessary for life, simply because they cannot pay their water bill. Under international law, the Un General Assembly Resolution 64/292 passed July 28, 2010 human right to water and sanitation is recognized as a human right and as essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. This right to water is protected under treaties like the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All forms of discrimination against women(CEDAW) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child(CRC). Although the United States did not ratify this extremely important right and instead regulates it as a commodity and public utility, that does not mean, as a community we should not also recognize this basic right, especially with so many families being affected in Pipestone.

The water rates have risen at an unsustainable rate. I say unsustainable, because behind my own payment plan effort, there were three families in line behind me to try to keep themselves from being disconnected to a source of life. This affects the low- income and marginalized communities the most. It places families at risk of neglect through no fault of their own, aside from utilities being so high and an inability to keep up with them, or the high prices to be reconnected to a source necessary for life. A person cannot clean, cook, bathe or live without water. It poses public health risks and disproportionately effects low income households. It can lead to housing instability and can lead to family separation and homelessness – for example, having to send our children to the homes of family members, because your home has no water.

About a year or so ago, I was asked my opinion on the idea for a new pool. If our city has enough money to contemplate another pool, which takes water, there is no reason that our city is unable to ensure that its citizens remain with running water. Other cities have implemented income-based water plans, among other solutions. If our water is costing us almost \$200 dollars per household, then we do not have the most efficient processes that we could, if other places are able to operate on less. Access to water is a human right, and with accusations already pertinent to attempts to gentrify and push out the marginalized, this does not help that image as a community.


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