From: Chadwick Moore
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: Increase in Water Rates
Date: Thursday, November 25, 2021 10:34:51 AM

Hello City Council,
I received a notice regarding the proposed rate increases affecting stormwater, wastewater, and water use. Provided the rate increases are well founded and justified, I have no objection to the rate increases per se, and appreciate the rate increases being phased in over time.

I would like to point out an opportunity that the city is missing — it is clearly in the best interests of the city and its citizens to use water in the most efficient and beneficial way, yet there are no rebates being offered by the city for water conservation. The largest use of water for many residences is lawn irrigation, and a casual observation during any summer shows water running off from lawns, inefficient sprinkler heads, and poor timing of water application. The typical sprinkler heads installed by the popular city contractors and homeowners are far from the most efficient options available. Why not provide rebates for high efficiency sprinkler heads and WaterSmart controllers? Look to what the cities/utilities of Denver and Sacramento have done. From my own experience retrofitting old sprinklers with Hunter MP Rotor heads, not only did I save water, but my lawn was more evenly green. Rebates should cover the cost differential between a low-quality sprinkler head ($1.50) and any one of a number of efficient sprinkler heads ($10), or a cheap irrigation timer to a WaterSmart one to encourage adoption. This should substantially benefit the city by reducing the need to upgrade supply lines and avoid overtaxing groundwater resources. Other ideas include incentives for removing sections of lawns and replacing it with low water use vegetation. Such “cash for grass” or “turf replacement” programs have been quite successful elsewhere and can help meet other sustainability objectives like providing plants for local pollinators or simply encouraging homeowners to express themselves through unique landscaping.

In fact, I’d be in favor of increasing water use rates slightly more to support water conservation rebate programs. The operating shortfall for City of Missoula water is an opportunity to look to some creative solutions and help residence avoid higher bills through lower water use and drought-proofing our infrastructure, making it a win-win for everyone.

Chad Moore
203 Rita Ct.
Missoula, MT 59803