

**IRON RIVER CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2002
6:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Legion Room of the Iron River City Hall, with Mayor Charlotte Soderbloom presiding.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Members present included Councilmen Virgil Thompson, Tom Beber, Ray Coates, Klint Safford, Mayor Charlotte Soderbloom, City Manager Rick Commenator, City Attorney Mark Tousignant and City Clerk Peggy Shamion.

Tom and Damon Nasser, Steele Magnet, Robert and Bob Possanza, Wayne and Karen Wales, Don Autio, Tom Karvala, Craig and Rosemary Tarsi, Sue Clish, Duane Suliin, Charlie DelAngelo, Arthur Sacheck, Don Bastianello, Richard Nielsen and Ernie Bigari.

The purpose of the meeting is to review proposed amendments to the city's water and sewer ordinances and to receive public comments on the proposed.

Arthur Sacheck opened the meeting and felt that after reviewing the language of the proposed amendments to the ordinance, he can't justify charging by meters for apartment complex's, and multiple units. He felt the old system of billing is adequate.

Tom Nasser asked what is wrong with charging by water or per gallon.

Manager Commenator told him that the larger the meter is, a larger amount of use is going through the meter and has more water volume going through the meter.

Don Autio argued that the volume has nothing to do with the flow. His suggestion was to perhaps drop the minimum gallons below 5,000. Autio felt the definition of a user is, one line and one meter.

Richard Nielsen felt that the city was taking the cost from the average citizen and hitting the businesses with the increase.

Steele Magnet pointed out that according to the existing ordinance, there shall be no discrimination amongst users. He felt that if the city needs money why can't they just raise the rates across the board and then everyone would be treated equally. Mr. Magnet felt the city is putting the burden on the businesses which makes it hard for businesses to survive.

Bob Possanza owner of the Iron River Care Center said that they were listed on the sheet as having a 2" meter and their bill would increase approximately 25%. However, he pointed out that he thinks they have a 4" meter and that would increase their bills by 48%. Mr. Possanza felt that this was unacceptable because the same amount of water is still going through the meter. They are probably the biggest user in the city. He stated that a rate increase in gallonage is much more probable.

Wayne Wales told the board that he has a 1 1/2" line coming into his building, but when they installed his meter, he was given a 2" meter because a 1 1/2" meter was not available at that time. Now he's wondering if he was going to be charged for a 2" meter. Commentator told him, that he wouldn't be charged for a 2" meter.

Craig Tarsi informed everyone on how the issue all started, with him questioned being billed for a unit upstairs in an apartment and also downstairs; along with another building he owns which is currently vacant and has an apartment upstairs. He felt he was being double billed. (he has only one meter, but is being billed for two units at each). Upon checking into other buildings in town, they were being billed different than he was.

Councilmen Safford interjected and explained that Duane Reid of Rural Development dictates a minimum charge to the city, because of the money the city is borrowing from the government. They want to be guaranteed that the city can pay back the debt for the water project. Safford also pointed out, that presently the senior citizens are paying for more than what they use.

Commentator said that currently, the city has established a user based system. One of the problems is defining what a user is.

Tom Karvala from the WIC Public Schools said that they will have a 77% increase. During the summer months no one is in the building.

A letter was read aloud from Gene Mottes of Riverside Developers (attached).

It seemed to be the general consensus of most of those in attendance, to leave the ordinance as is, with the exception of critiquing those areas of duplex's or multi users, and perhaps raising the rates or lowering the minimum amount of gallons allowed.

Thompson moved with Coates supporting to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Peggy Shamion, CMC
City Clerk