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Muscatine Power and Water  
3205 Cedar Street  
P.O. Box 899  
Muscatine, IA 52761

Contact: Erika Cox, [ecox@mpw.org](mailto:ecox@mpw.org)

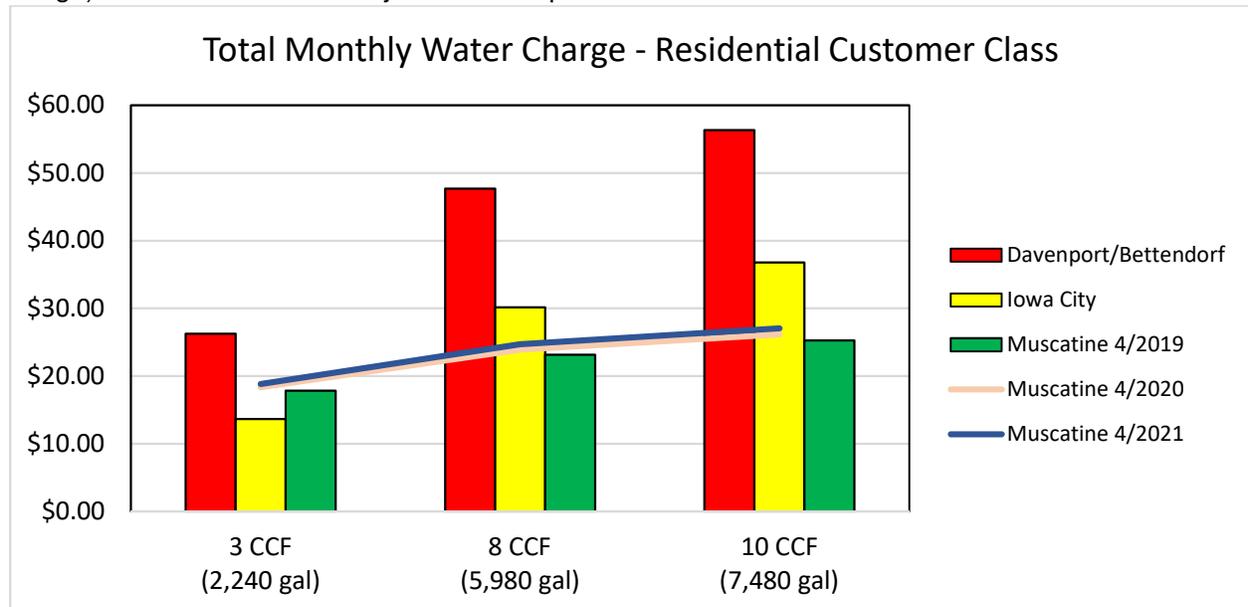
**For Immediate Release**

**Water Utility Rate Adjustment Approved,  
Water Tower Refurbishment and FTTH Updates**

At the final Board of Water, Electric and Communications Trustees Meeting of 2019, the Board approved an overall water rate adjustment recommendation of 3.5% effective April 1, 2020 and a similar overall adjustment effective April 1, 2021. The overall 3.5% adjustment is down from recent years' overall 5.5% adjustments reflecting the Water Utility's ongoing sound fiscal management.

Staff followed the recommendation from a Water Utility Cost of Service and Rate Design Study conducted by Dave Berg Consulting, LLC (DBC) in March 2019. The rate adjustment is required to address the continued growth in community water consumption and major capital investments, such as the City of Muscatine's West Hill Sewer Separation Project and Corridor Revitalization Projects, as well as the recent land acquisition, wellfield development, and water treatment facility expansion.

"We continually monitor the operations and performance of the Water Utility to make sure we are using resources efficiently while being responsive to the needs of our customer-owners," said Gage Huston, General Manager of MPW. "Even with the proposed rate increases, Muscatine's water rates remain competitive and below state and national averages." A typical residential customer (5 CCF usage) will see an increase of just 60 cents per month in 2020.



The Trustees approved the recommendation to set dates for receipt of bids and conduct a public hearing for the Water Tower Refurbishment Project planned in 2020. An outpouring of community support this past fall resulted in Muscatine winning a state-wide competition to 'wrap' the water tower, a project funded by the Iowa Finance Authority. The wrap, and artwork designed by Muscatine native Laura Palmer, is valued at nearly \$30,000 and will help offset some of the total cost of refurbishing the water tower located at Bidwell Rd/Hwy 61. A total expenditure of \$561,000 has been budgeted in 2020 to repair and recoat the interior and exterior surfaces of the water tower. This will be the first major refurbishment of the water tower since it was installed in 1999.

Good progress is being made on the Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Project. Work continues to get remaining addresses in already opened Service Areas ready for fiber installation, as well as NORTH-018. NORTH-018 is expected to open for installs in January. Mainline construction verification and drop work is finalizing in NORTH-025, NORTH-026, and NORTH-027, with the goal to complete all drops in these areas before the end of construction season and completion of splicing and testing activities over the winter. (Refer to [www.mpw.org/communications](http://www.mpw.org/communications) for exact locations of above-referenced Service Areas.)

In providing an update to the Board, Erika Cox, Director of Customer and Technology Experience shared, "The local AEG team has been working very hard to complete the construction milestone and is very close. At times it has been two steps forward and one step back such as when a drop that was previously completed was determined to have a quality issue and had to be redone, or similar unexpected additional work was identified. The MPW FTTH Project team is very happy with the drop subcontractors AEG now has on the project and we've seen an immediate decrease in construction related complaints and service issues after AEG released several underperforming crews from the project. There is a reserve of "premise ready" addresses so that installations can continue at the ~400 per month pace through February and we expect more addresses to come in to hopefully keep installs at a seamless pace throughout the remainder of the project. And, we've already started planning for the final push of construction next year with goals of addressing remaining pain points that both MPW and AEG have.

"I continue to be cautiously optimistic we have this project on track to finish next year if we get a fast start in the Spring, good weather, and the appropriate number of resources from AEG. I'm very appreciative of all the team members supporting this project – it takes a very large group from both MPW and AEG to support a project of this magnitude," concluded Cox.

Efficiencies continue to be implemented on the FTTH Project. The Board was provided a demonstration of an app created internally that shaves days and dozens of truck rolls off the entire closeout process for each Service Area.

"We are able to realize project efficiencies by using in-house experts, GIS technology already available to us, and mobile computer tablets," said Cox. "Every efficiency improvement we roll out keeps project costs lower, which benefits MPW, our customers, and AEG. It's another example of a win-win-win we've accomplished on this project."

In other Board of Trustees action, the Trustees:

- Ratified and approved November expenditures and transactions totaling \$12,192,683.79.
- Set dates for receipt of bids and public hearing/award for the Water Tower Refurbishment Project. Receipt of bids will be 2/4/2020 and the public hearing/award will be 2/25/20.
- Accepted and approved the change in dates of the November and December 2020 Board meetings.
- Appointed Trustee Steven Bradford to the MAGIC Governing Board.

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*Muscatine Power and Water (MPW) is a customer-driven, not-for-profit municipal utility, established by the community for the purpose of serving the community responsively, competitively, and responsibly. MPW provides reliable electricity, high quality water, and state-of-the-art communications services, including Internet, video, and phone services, to homes and businesses throughout the Muscatine community at rates below state and national averages with outstanding customer service. MPW is locally controlled and operated for the benefit and betterment of the community.*