

Louisburg Speaks ^{KS}

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April - May 2021

Natural gas customers to see increase to pay for February cold spell

Gas rates will increase for City of Louisburg customers after action taken by the City Council at its April 5 meeting.

The increase in rates are necessary to help offset the cost of natural gas used during the almost two week arctic cold snap that had its grip on much of the Midwest region.

The City of Louisburg's gas bill for that month was \$3,897,501.04. An average February bill for citywide natural gas is less than \$100,000.

The City used \$1 million from the natural gas capital improvement fund to pay down part of that cost. City staff then applied for and was granted a low-interest loan offered through the state of Kansas. Kansas legislators in late February approved this loan program to help Kansas cities cover the cost of the unprecedented high natural gas cost.

The loan, in the amount of \$2,639,994, has an interest rate of one-quarter of one percent (0.25%). The City Council unanimously approved to repay the loan over the course of 10 years with bi-annual payments.

At the April 5 meeting, the Council reviewed six repayment scenarios presented by City Administrator Nathan Law.

The scenarios all called for an increase of the base rate. This rate is the amount that is charged for having natural gas service. The proposed rate

increase ranged from \$20.29 to \$26.69 in the different scenarios. Additionally each scenario also called for various increment increases in the variable rate. The variable rate is what consumers pay for actual natural gas used and is based on three steps, with the first step a small user, the second step a moderate user and the third step a large user. This last step is generally commercial customers.

The Council chose to take a moderate approach and adjust the rates slightly to make the bi-annual payment.

Staff reviewed natural gas usage for four random homes in each of the City's four wards and ran the usage through each of the six scenarios.

Based on natural gas consumption during the cold snap and under the selected scenario, an average homeowner in Ward 1 would have had a bill increase from about \$13-\$22; in Ward 2 from \$15 to \$56; in Ward 3 from \$17 to



About 1,500 natural gas customers in Louisburg will see a rate increase on the May bill.

\$27 and in Ward 4 from \$15 to \$20 for that month alone.

Councilmember Sandy Harris, representing Ward 3, said the selected scenario is the most appealing to him because the average base is in the middle and the average variable is lower than other options. "The jump isn't so big but still gets us there," he said.

Council will review the rates annually and make modifications as necessary.

The rate increase will take affect when published in the official city newspaper and be reflected on that month's bill.

New natural gas rates compared to previous rates. Natural gas users are charged a variable rate depending on usage and rate applies to therms used. A therm is equal to 100,000 BTUs.

	current rate	new rate
base	\$18	\$22.87
variable step 1	\$0.76575	\$0.818321
variable step 2	\$0.7325	\$0.785071
variable step 3	\$0.69975	\$0.752321



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City Hall

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Louisburg, KS 66053
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www.louisburgkansas.gov
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Monday-Friday

Police Department

Chief Tim Bauer
209 S. Metcalf Rd.
Louisburg, KS 66053
913-837-3191

Fire Department

Chief Gerald Rittinghouse
205 S. Metcalf Rd.
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913-837-4700

Louisburg Speaks is published six times a year by the City of Louisburg for its residents. Please direct questions or comments to jcarder@louisburgkans.gov

The City of Louisburg requires building permits. Please call the Building & Zoning Department at 913-837-5811 before beginning any construction project.

Fence building, tree planting requires a phone call first

If you are thinking of starting a spring or summer project that involves digging, be sure to contact Dig Safe and get underground utility lines in your yard marked for free.

If a new fence, tree, even a small shrub or similar project is on your to-do list, locating utilities first is the law. Digging without knowing where underground utilities are can be dangerous. Hitting a utility line can disrupt service to the area or even cause injury or death.

Kansas residents can request their utilities be marked for free by either calling 811, request the service at KansasOneCall.com or through the Kansas 811 app.

Utility companies have two business days to mark their lines. As a reminder private lines such as sprinkler systems and invisible fences are not marked.

While you are working in your yard this summer or enjoying the outdoors, it's always a good idea to watch for potential gas leaks.

Natural gas is odorless so utilities add an odorant that smells like rotten eggs to help make the gas more easily detected in the event of a leak. Unexplained dead vegetation may signal a gas leak. If you see unexplained dirt blowing from the ground or bubbling water, that might signal a leak. You might also hear a whistling, hissing or roaring sound near a pipeline.

If you suspect a gas leak, immediately leave the area and call 911.

If a gas leak is suspected remember to never do anything that could cause a spark like using either a landline or cellular telephone, turning on or off lights or other electronic device, starting an engine or striking a match or lighter.



MAYOR'S MINUTE

Council facing busy spring

As I write this, it is opening day of baseball season and with at least some fans attending games, it is starting to feel a little more normal with each passing day. Like ball players and fans, we can all spend more and more time outside as the weather starts to get warmer.

While enjoying the sun, I encourage you to still pay attention to what your City Council is doing. The Council will be faced with some tough decisions in the next few weeks that will impact us all. We will be trying to figure out the best ways to pay the enormous price hikes in our natural gas cost during the cold weather months. Obviously, we budget and expect increases in the winter months, but this increase across the country was so extraordinary that we do not feel it would be fair to pass all the cost at once on to the citizens. Therefore, we are exploring less impactful ways to spread out the cost.

We are also looking at some of the City-owned properties to decide if this is the correct time to explore selling the land to any interested buyers. The Council is also considering offering incentives to homebuilders. Contractors are asking us about different types of incentives available to build homes on vacant lots.

You all have fantastic representatives on the City Council, and we are listening to each of you who reach out to share your ideas and opinions. It is important to stay involved and help us to make the best decisions that meet the long-term goals for the city of Louisburg.



MARTY SOUTHARD

Why are there policies and rules?

In the first Government 101 article we talked about policies created by governing bodies and enforced by staff/employees. It is easy to ask the question, "Why do we need those policies?"

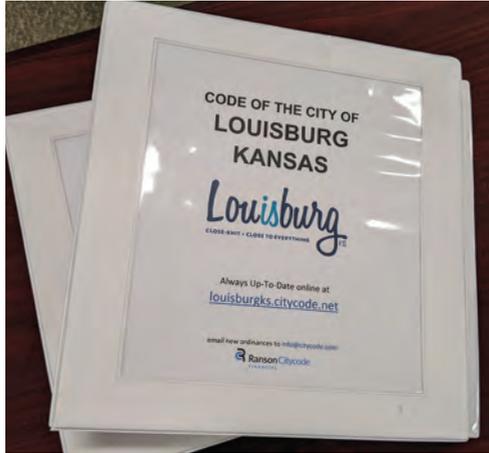
Political philosophy has for centuries included a notion called The Social Contract Theory. That theory supposes that individuals agree to be governed as a part of an orderly society because that offers certain amenities, securities, or basic benefits beyond what a single person or family could provide themselves. The orderly part of that theory is how policies are justified at various levels of government.

WHAT POLICIES GOVERN IN LOUISBURG?

State laws specific to cities apply, such as Standard Traffic Ordinances and Uniform Public Offense Codes, both of which are primarily based on state laws. Locally the governing body has a comprehensive list of laws called the Code of the City of Louisburg, which includes local laws and policies as allowed by the state of Kansas through Home Rule authority. Louisburg has adopted local Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, as well as incorporated building codes compiled by other organizations.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF RULES!

Over the many years of society, many of the rules and regulations were created based on "lessons learned". There was a time when buildings did not have safety codes for construction, but no doubt some tragic collapse provided the basis for minimum building practic-



The Code of the City of Louisburg is available in book form in City Hall or is also on the City's website under the City Code icon located at the bottom of each web page.

es to protect life safety.

Other policies focus on protection of property rights or property values. Orderly growth and development sometimes require cities to think of the best areas to build industrial/manufacturing, for example, which may not necessarily be next to someone's house. To protect the value and enjoyment of that residence, there are policies that require a separate body (Planning Commission) to oversee a public hearing to ensure property owners' voices are heard on a proposed development.

The City of Louisburg wants its residents to be informed, which is why many of the local policies are accessible on the City website www.louisburg-kansas.gov and why all local policies are available for review in hard copy during regular business hours, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at City Hall, 215 S. Broadway.

It's backflow inspection season

Residents or businesses that have a lawn irrigation system or fire suppression system are required by City Code to conduct an annual backflow inspection.

Both of these systems have the potential to put water back into the City's water distribution system. These systems could potentially cause contamination or pollution to enter the water system if a backflow prevention device is not installed or if it has failed. A backflow preventer keeps hazardous contaminants such as herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, bacteria or other foreign matter from entering the water line.

Inspection reminder letters were mailed to all owners of such systems in the City's database. If you have not received your letter, please contact the City's Codes Enforcement Office at 837-5811 to learn more about inspection requirements.

Freedom Fest

Plans are underway for Freedom Fest 2021 with all activities returning to Lewis-Young Park to celebrate the July 4 holiday.

Activities will start at the park at 6 p.m. with fireworks at dusk. Watch the City's website and Facebook for more information as the date gets closer.

Businesses, churches and organizations are invited to have a booth at the event. Please contact City Hall for more information.

The committee is currently seeking more community members to participate. Contact City Hall if interested.

Filing deadline

The filing deadline for the two open City Council seats is noon, Tuesday, June 1. All city residents will elect the mayor's position while Ward 3 voters will choose that seat.

Interested candidates should file at the County Clerk's office, 201 S. Pearl, Suite 102, Paola.

Budget workshop

Louisburg City Council will conduct a budget workshop at a yet-to-be-scheduled date in May.

At this workshop, council members discuss budget priorities for 2022.

The public is invited to attend. Watch for more information under the Agendas & Minutes icon on the City's website.

City tags

Pet and UTV owners are reminded that tags are up for renewal.

Dogs older than six months are required to be licensed per City Code. Tags are good for the calendar year and should be paid by May 1 to avoid a penalty. Cost of the tag is \$3 for a spayed or neutered pet and \$5 for a non-spayed or non-neutered pet. Proof of the pet's rabies vaccine is also required.

UTVs driven on City streets must be tagged. Renewal stickers are available for \$50 and proof of insurance is required. A first-time tag is \$100 and the UTV must also be inspected by the Police Department. Call the department at 837-3191 to schedule an appointment.

Pet tags and the UTV renewal stickers may be purchased at City Hall during regular business hours.

Pool opens Memorial weekend; same process as last season

Louisburg Aquatic Center is gearing up for opening Memorial weekend. The pool will open at noon, Saturday, May 29.

City Council determined this year's season will mirror last year with a pool pass required for entry to the pool. All passes must be secured at City Hall, 215 S. Broadway, and will not be available at the aquatic center. Single day admission will not be accepted.

Passes will be sold at City Hall from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 1, 8 and 15. Passes will also be sold opening weekend, May 29-31, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Beginning June 1, passes may be purchased at City Hall during regular business hours, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Passes will be \$25 per person and

may be paid with cash, check or credit card. A handling fee of 2.5 percent is added to all credit card transactions.

Pool passes are only available to Miami County residents. Please bring a utility bill to verify residency. All individuals must be present at the time of purchase to receive a pass and have a photo taken for pass ID.

Children 2 and under will not be required to get a pass. Seniors 65 and over will need a pass but those will be issued at no cost. Lap swim only passes will be required but are also issued at no cost.

The concession stand will again be closed for this season. Guests may bring their own food and drinks.

Deck chairs will not be provided so guests should bring their own chairs or

towels. Social distancing will be encouraged. Any guest that displays COVID-19 symptoms will not be allowed to enter the pool.

Children under the age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Pool hours are noon to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 7:30 Saturday and Sunday. Lap swim is from 8-9 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Pool parties must be scheduled one week in advance and can be booked from 8:30-10:30 p.m. Thursday or Friday and 8-10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Call City Hall at 837-5731 to book a pool party. Pricing varies on size of party.

The Louisburg Barracuda swim team will offer swim lessons this year. Sign-ups will be available online. More in-

formation on swim lesson sign-ups will be available on the Aquatic Center page on the City's website as it becomes available.

The pool will close for the season at 5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 15.



The Louisburg Aquatic Center will open for its 22nd season this year.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Louisburg City Council
6:30 pm Monday, May 3
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg Planning Commission
6:30 pm Wednesday, May 26
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Historic Preservation Commission
6:30 pm Wednesday, June 2
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg Planning Commission
6:30 pm Wednesday, June 30
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Historic Preservation Commission
6:30 pm Wednesday, May 5
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg Aquatic Center Opens
noon, Saturday, May 29
402 Aquatic Dr.

Louisburg City Council
6:30 pm Monday, June 7
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

An updated calendar as well as agendas and minutes for city meetings can be found at www.louisburgkansas.gov under the Agendas & Minutes icon.

Louisburg Park & Tree Board
6:30 pm Monday, May 10
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg City Hall closed for Memorial Day, Monday, May 31

Louisburg Park & Tree Board
6:30 pm Monday, June 14
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg City Council
6:30 pm Monday, May 17
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Election filing deadline for City Council
noon, Tuesday, June 1
County Election Office

Louisburg Recreation Commission
6:30 pm Tuesday, June 15
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg Recreation Commission
6:30 pm Tuesday, May 18
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Fox Hall Board
5 pm Tuesday, June 1
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

Louisburg City Council
6:30 pm Monday, June 21
City Hall, 215 S. Broadway

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