

KGID board to vote on whether to alter water rates

By Kathryn Reed

The nearly 3,000 water customers of Kingsbury General Improvement District are likely to have their water rates increased.



The board members, some of who are up for re-election Nov. 6, are expected to vote Oct. 23 on the rate adjustment.

As of summer 2011, all 2,850 customers have meters. What KGID now wants to implement is charging customers based on the amount of usage – so, to actually use the meters.

KGID boundaries cover the entire Kingsbury Grade area and then to Lake Village.

According to KGID General Manager Cameron McKay, \$2.9 million is needed in revenues to cover the agency's costs. Of that, \$2.1 million is the base rate. The rest is variable costs.

"We are trying to structure it so everyone pays a base rate to pay our fixed costs. After the base rate, a commodity fee per 1,000 gallons will be developed," McKay told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We are the last utility ... every other pays what they use. The water industry is lagging well behind in that."

But the new price structure is not sitting well with all KGID customers.

About 60 people filled a room earlier this month in Stateline to hear with officials had to say as well as ask questions and voice their opinions.

Many of the customers are in apartments, so their landlord will decide the fee.

Jack Riley owns Lake Vista Apartments, which is 94 units in three complexes.

“We are hoping the board will craft a rate that is workable and affordable for the tenants who live in our complexes,” Riley said.

He said several are “affordable housing tenants” and he’s concerned about their ability to sustain a rent increase to accommodate him having to pay a higher water bill.

It was initially proposed that people in studios would have to pay the same base rate as single-family residences.

McKay said staff would present the board with several scenarios at the next meeting. He added that it’s possible the rate for an apartment dweller could double.

The goal, according to McKay, is to make the rates equitable because for years commercial properties have been subsidizing residential customers. The highest water users are residential customers because of landscaping.

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Note: The KGID board meeting is Oct. 23 at 6pm at the Tahoe Transportation Center, 169 Highway 50, Stateline. This is the same building as Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority.