



## Mayor's Letter

August 15, 2022

**WATER SYSTEM UPDATE** Although still critical, there has been significant improvement in our water availability due to much less usage this month. When we implemented the Extended Water Emergency Ordinance back in April, there were three components. First was education - everyone in town knows that one well failed and we have limited water. The restrictions on watering were in several mayor's letters, the town website (with a red banner across the homepage), the bulletin boards, taped to the mailboxes, and on the marquee as you enter town. Second, we raised the rates on the high-volume users. **This was critical to get people to change their behavior.** Let me give you an example, last year someone used 46,000 gallons in June and got a \$320 bill. In July they used 52,000 gallons and got a \$350 bill. In August they used 59,000 gallons. The bill wasn't high enough to get them to change their usage, it was probably still a lot less than their CoServ bill. So, the only way to get people to change was to make it really, really expensive to use a lot of water. So, yes, many people who used lots of water

Water Usage	Number of Houses	
	JULY	AUGUST
Over 50,000 Gallons	<b>14</b>	0
40,000 - 50,000	<b>32</b>	4

were shocked by their bills last month. With the next billing cycle historically our greatest usage something had to change. As you can see from the chart, we reached the point where money became important.

Our third component was enforcement. We have already had one round of court transactions, and next week the cases have potential fines of over \$20,000. As I drove to the office on Saturday, I saw a sprinkler system on Highridge blasting away. So, that owner who decided that they wanted to get three days of watering this week instead of two is coming to court with their checkbook.

**THE MISTAKE** that a lot of people made in July was that they didn't look at their usage; they cranked up their sprinklers and filled their pools without realizing the volume. Anyone can just lift the lid and look at their water meter and read the number. Let me be clear, I don't care why people use water - I'm not going to tell you what to do with your yards, trees, pools. It doesn't matter. **I am not C.S.I. - Water Guy.** The aquifer doesn't care why we use the water. It doesn't say 'Larry's garden is wilting, let's put out 5 more gallons per minute' The storage tanks don't care if grandpa is having a pool party with the grandkids. You are in control and solely responsible for your individual water usage. **No explaining or complaining.** Weather-wise this is our toughest stretch, hang in there and just do the best you can. There's no reason to let stuff die, garden hoses don't cause us problems.

**ROADS.** Typically, when cities put in roads, they borrow money for 25-30 years to line up their financing with the expected life of the roads. As we all know, the longer the term the smaller are the annual payments, which leaves cities with more money for other priorities. At our August 11th meeting, the Town Council authorized me to notify American National Bank that we are redeeming our \$1.6 million 2014 Road Bonds and paying them off early, after only 8 years. Our financial strength continues to grow, and this is solid evidence of the hard work and dedication of the Council to our financial future. I will have much more to say next month on our progress towards the goal of zero debt, zero taxes.

**Engineering and the permitting process for the new well are underway and moving ahead. There's never been a better time to be in Lakewood Village**

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