



# CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

#1 GARY K. ANDERSON PLAZA

DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62523-1196

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2023

## **City Council adjusts water rate, approves studies for improvements to Civic Center, Library, Municipal Services building**

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the April 3, 2023, Decatur City Council meeting include an adjustment to the water utility rate, and an agreement with a local architectural firm to study improvements to the Decatur Civic Center, Decatur Public Library, and the City Municipal Services Center (MSC).

### **Water utility rate adjustment**

On Monday night the Decatur City Council approved an adjustment to the water utility rate. City staff estimates new construction funded by the Water and Sewer Funds could increase 20 percent in 2023. To help pay for – and keep pace with – these necessary infrastructure improvements, the Council agreed to a 6 percent increase in water utility rates. This adjustment, along with the sewer rate adjustment approved last Council meeting, will result in the average residential customer seeing an increase of \$2.06 per month on their City utility bill.

Council was reluctant to pass this increase onto Decatur citizens but heard from City staff that an increase is necessary to keep up with important capital infrastructure projects. A flat increase of 2.5 percent, like last year, would start to undermine the City's ability to use water and sewer infrastructure as a major economic development recruiting asset.

Another change was the addition of a \$100 water deposit requirement for all water customers that have had two or more delinquencies leading to water shut-offs in the last 12-month period. This was added by the request of landlords to help pay for circumstances when their tenant builds up a balance and abandons the rental, leaving unpaid costs to the building owner/landlord. The \$100 deposit requirement goes into effect October 1, 2023.

### **Study for improvements to Civic Center, Library, MSC**

Another item the Council approved was an agreement with Architectural Expressions, LLP (AEX) to study improvements for the Decatur Civic Center, Decatur Public Library, and the City Municipal

Services Center (MSC).

- Civic Center: The City is asking AEX to provide a space analysis of the building, and a security assessment & recommendation to reduce security vulnerabilities. The space analysis will help determine where additional meeting rooms could be located. Other than security improvements, no remodeling is anticipated in 2023.
- Library: The City needs to upgrade the Library building's HVAC system, recoat the roof, and make other site repairs.
- MSC: The MSC roof is from 1987 and needs major improvements. AEX will recommend and design a roof improvement. This project also includes an addition that will provide better access in the facility. Currently, staff members must go through the men's and women's restrooms to move between the main offices.

The fees for these studies will not exceed a total of \$275,000.

## **In other business**

In other business...Council approved an agreement with the Public Safety Training Foundation for the use of high-quality training equipment and facilities. The Decatur Police Department will continue to use the VirTra V-300 System, a state-of-the-art virtual training simulator, to train for making split-second decisions they may face in real life.

Finally, Council agreed to a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Science to help conserve the Lake Decatur Watershed. This Regional Conservation Partnership Program will work with farmers/landowners to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients flowing into Lake Decatur.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: [www.decaluril.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/](http://www.decaluril.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/)

###