DELPHOS — Delphos City Council will see two separate pieces of legislation from the Utilities Committee on Monday. One ordinance gives an increase of 2 percent for 2 years in water rates. The second ordinance asks for a 5 percent increase in sewer rates for one year. The committee voted unanimously to leave the Consumer Price Index ordinance currently in place alone. The current CPI is 1.7 percent.

Committee Chair Rick Hanser opened the meeting by saying water and sewer rates need to be raised so the accounts don't go into the red or fall below what is needed for operations.

"No one wants to do this but we can't operate in the hole," Hanser said.

City Auditor Tom Jettinhoff presented several proposals for rate increases for both the water and sewer accounts for committee members to look over. Councilman Kevin Osting questioned some of the increases and the resulting balances.

"I know we can't go in the red but we don't need to have that much of a balance in these accounts, either," Osting said. "Everyone is struggling and I can't see us having that big of a balance when it's hard for people to pay their bills."

Hanser asked if the accounts could be handled with separate legislation and found they could.

"The sewer account is the one with the real problem so that is the one we need to be more careful with," he said.

Jettinhoff agreed.

“We don’t really know what is going on with the membranes and if we’ll need to replace every year but we need to be prepared,” he said.

The committee examined the water account and the proposed increases and decided on the 2 percent increase for two years.

Councilmen Josh Gillespie and Joe Martz suggested increasing the sewer rates for one year and revisiting the issue next January. Everyone agreed.

The finance Committee followed with Chair Martz proposing an ordinance for council to approve the latest revised budget presented by Safety Service Director Greg Berquist which shaves $64,000 from the previously proposed budget. A temporary budget is in place and expires on March 30.

Council will also hear this ordinance Monday.

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