

## **Borough of Conshohocken Authority Freezes Rates for 3 years**

As every homeowner and resident of Conshohocken knows, the costs for everything from food and beverages to vehicle fuel, clothing and homes go up year after year, if not month after month. In fact, nearly everything has at least a modest cost of living increase each year.

Fortunately for the ratepayers of the Borough of Conshohocken Authority, there is an exception to this rule. The Board of Directors of the Borough of Conshohocken Authority has recently decided to freeze sewer rates for the next three years. The Board unanimously approved the rate freeze at its August 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Under the rate freeze, Conshohocken Borough customers will not see a rate increase until at least the year 2023. After five years of keeping rates flat, the Authority Board, in January 2018, passed a resolution to increase the consumption portion from \$3.07 per thousand gallons to \$3.30 per thousand gallons. “The Board knows that the residents of Conshohocken Borough are concerned about rates, especially as we have seen rates in nearby Townships and Boroughs go up year after year, so the Board wanted to make it official that there would be no rate increases until at least 2023,” said Carol Smith, Chairwoman of the Authority’s Board of Directors. She added that the Authority’s staff and professionals agree that the rate freeze will not affect the Authority’s ability to serve its customers.

An article in the May 9, 2019 edition of the Philadelphia Inquirer noted the Public Utility Commission had recently approved a sewer rate increase of 34.6% for those customers served by Aqua Pennsylvania.

Following a three-year rate freeze that began in July of 2017, the Authority has modified the rate structure for West Conshohocken Borough customers, which will go into effect July 1, 2020. That modification will result in the average ratepayer spending about 37 cents more per day for sewer service.

Aqua Pennsylvania was an unsuccessful bidder for the West Conshohocken Sewer System which the Borough of Conshohocken Authority purchased in 2017. So while the ratepayers in West Conshohocken will see their rates go up slightly, as the Philadelphia Inquirer article makes clear, it could have been much higher if Aqua purchased the West Conshohocken Sewer System.

In order to make sure its intent was clear, the Authority’s Board of Directors has passed a resolution affirming that, following the West Conshohocken rate adjustment in 2020, the earliest that Conshohocken Borough and West Conshohocken Borough customers would see a subsequent rate increase would be the year 2023. No rate increase will be implemented in Conshohocken Borough for 2020.

“The Borough of Conshohocken Authority is managing its finances well and is in great fiscal shape,” Authority Executive Director Stephen Clark said.

The Authority has been instrumental in seeking – and receiving – grants to help fund upgrades, including \$200,000 to help fund the Odor Control project in July of 2016, \$337,000 for the March 2017 Interceptor Rehabilitation project and \$341,000 for the September 2018 Interceptor Rehabilitation project. Funding assistance coupled with a fiscally responsible approach to operations has contributed to the Authority’s ability to maintain the current rates for at least three more years.