

# Village of Lewiston considering changes to water rate, park fees

**BY JOSHUA MALONI**  
GM/Managing Editor

Trustees in the Village of Lewiston will hold two public hearings at the start of their Nov. 18 regular meeting to discuss a proposed water rate fee increase, as well as a possible price adjustment in park rentals. The session begins at 6 p.m. in the Red Brick Municipal Building, 145 N. Fourth St.

## Water rate fee

On Monday, board members reviewed the village's annual audit, this one for the fiscal year that ended May 31. Jeremy Smith, CPA, of certified public accounting firm Lumsden McCormick, noted the water fund balance netted \$31,000 for FY 2023, compared to just \$7,000 in 2024.

Smith said, "We're starting to get to a point where there's going to be nothing left in our water fund."

Treasurer Stephanie Longwell said, "Jeremy and I have had some conversations about suggestions on what to raise."

She explained, "The water fund has had a deficit and only has \$7,000 in fund balance. The auditor suggested to raise it to \$4.50 per 100 cubic feet, but the board thought that was too high at once; so, they are having a public hearing on Nov. 18 to discuss raising it to \$4.25 per 100 cubic feet. It is currently at \$4.03 per 100 cubic feet."

"As of Jan. 1, 2025, Niagara County Water District is raising their fee 10 cents."

Smith said, "It is something to consider when we start talking about our upcoming rates. Right now, they're charging us way more than we're passing to our customers."

"After meeting with the auditor, obviously we have to increase our water rates," Mayor Anne Welch said.

The last time the water rate was adjusted up was in 2022.

Trustee Nick Conde stressed the rate fee would be a direct result of the increase from Niagara County. "I don't want anybody to think that the village is just raising our rates because (we want to)."

Trustee Jim Fittante asked Longwell, "Do you know what the adjacent municipalities are doing to compensate?"

She said, "I did reach out to multiple municipalities. They all charge in gallons versus cubic feet, which we charge in, so I can't do an apples-to-apples comparison because of that. Some communities charge more; some communities charge less; a couple charge the same."

Longwell added, "We also have to pay for personnel, water breaks."

In addition, trustees will look into raising the capital water improvement fee from \$10 to \$15 per quarter.

Longwell said, "As everybody knows, our infrastructure needs a lot of help and love, and we also have some (Environmental Protection Agency) things going on that we'll need some of that money for, as well."

That includes a new water line to be installed by the Niagara Scenic Parkway overpass and extending to Center Street.

Other than the water rate,

VILLAGE PARK	Family Functions		Non-Profit/Charity		Business/Corporation	
	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident
<b>ACADEMY PARK</b>						
Pavilion	\$200	\$250	No Fee	\$50	\$250	\$300
Band Shell & Park	N/A	N/A	No Fee	\$50	\$250	\$300
Park Only	N/A	N/A	No Fee	\$50	\$100	\$150
<b>MARILYN TOOHEY PARK</b>						
Pavilion	\$150	\$200	No Fee	\$25	\$200	\$250
<b>LEWISTON LANDING</b>						
Lower Pavilion*	\$100	\$125	No Fee	\$25	\$150	\$175
<b>HENNEPIN PARK</b>						
w/Gazebo	\$100	\$125	No Fee	\$25	\$150	\$175
<b>RICHARD F. SOLURI PARK</b>						
coming soon*						

Smith said the village's finances are in good shape.

## Facility fee

A second public hearing will be held on adjusting municipal park fees for Academy Park (rental for park, pavilion, bandshell), Marilyn Toohey Park (pavilion), Hennepin Park (gazebo), Lewiston Landing (to-be-built lower pavilion) and Richard F. Soluri Park.

Currently, all park rentals are \$50 per day, plus an additional \$25 for the Alphonso I. DiMino Memorial Band Shell at Academy Park.

A new fee schedule would include the following rental rate changes: (see above table).

Clerk Shannon Fundis said, "With the constant use of our parks, and the bandshell, we don't have funds put away for maintenance of what we're using. If we want to keep everything where it is, we need to increase our prices."

She added, "I did a lot of research on a lot of other municipalities. Some are a little bit lower. A lot of them are higher. So, I tried to come up with a format to benefit residents, to benefit our nonprofit organizations."

Welch referenced the use of Marilyn Toohey Park – which includes use of the playground

and splash pad – and said, "You can't go anyplace for a kid's birthday party for that (low of a rental fee)."

Further using that space as an example, Longwell said, "This year, we had 74 parties and generated \$3,700" at the \$50 fee. "If, say, two pieces of that playground go, we don't have enough to cover that."

Under the new fee schedule, those same 74 parties could net more than \$10,000.

"I think what Shannon did is reasonable," Welch said.

## Leaf pickup

Department of Public Works Superintendent Anthony Mang said leaf pickup will run an extra week this year, from Oct. 31 through Dec. 6.

## Peace Garden snow removal

Following a trial run of snow removal at the International Peace Garden over the winter of 2023-24, the DPW will discontinue this offering for the upcoming cold-weather season.

Mang said it's just a matter of time before a snowblower damages the bricks or other amenities located within the courtyard. "The chains just have a tendency to slip and scrape."

Trustees said the Peace Garden would close to the public for

the winter, with the exception of activities held during the Lewiston Christmas Walk weekend in December.

## Boat launch to close certain days for ice boom

To accommodate the installation of the ice boom, Mang said the North Water Street boat launch will be closed Nov. 4 and 5

(main boom) and Dec. 2 and 3 (secondary boom).

## Finally

Trustees approved the request from the Northwest Jazz Festival committee to hold the annual Lewiston music festival on Aug. 23-24, 2025. This request includes village facilities use from Aug. 23-25, use of the International Peace Garden and Hennepin Park; use of Center Street from Fourth to Seventh streets; as well as waiving of the open container bottle law for the two days of the event.

### TIMED AUCTION

Support Equipment Not Needed in Ongoing Operations, Several Dump Trucks, Sweepers, Water Purifier, Large Quantity Portable Fuel Tanks, Engines, Transmissions

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**CLOSES- FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup> @ 11:00 AM**  
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## TOWN OF PORTER HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

### NOTICE TO TOWN OF PORTER RESIDENTS

#### TOWN WIDE FINAL BRUSH PICKUP SCHEDULE

Starting the week of **November 4th to November 8th**

### THIS WILL BE THE LAST BRUSH PICKUP FOR THE YEAR

**Winter parking ordinances:**  
**NO PARKING ON ALL ROADS**  
**TOWN OF PORTER**  
**MIDNIGHT - 6 AM**  
**DECEMBER 1ST - APRIL 1ST**

Our website: [townofporter.net](http://townofporter.net)

David P. Burmaster  
Superintendent of Highways