

June 2020 Newsletter

Please submit questions/comments to admin@sallal.com

New City Conservation Ordinance

We have received many calls from members that live within City limits regarding the City's new Conservation ordinance. Sallal's attorney submitted a letter to the City during the Ordinance comment period essentially stating that we believe the City does not have authority to enforce the Ordinance against Sallal or its members. The City did not respond, and presently, while we continue to question whether the Ordinance is effective as to Sallal and its members, we do not have any plans to take any further actions regarding the Ordinance.

Sallal has always provided monthly water usage data to the City for the members that live within City limits and are also on sewer. This is so that the City knows how much to bill those customers for sewer usage. So, the City will have the water usage information from us that would allow the City to attempt to enforce the Ordinance for those members on sewer.

Please direct questions about the Ordinance to the City rather than Sallal by e-mailing soppedal@northbendwa.gov or calling (425) 888-7627 or (425) 888-1211 . Thank you!

Why Do We Need an Additional Source of Water?

Sallal's certificated water rights allow us to withdraw 696-acre feet of water per year out of the ground. We are currently using about 570-acre feet per year. But as growth continues, we will max out our rights and, if additional rights or supplies are not obtained, we won't be able to serve new connections - meaning Sallal would enter a moratorium. Our new Water System Plan estimates this will occur around 2033 if we do nothing. This would likely result in other purveyors stepping in to Sallal's service area. The economic impacts of Sallal being unable to serve new connections would be significant, so we are exploring options to acquire additional water supply. Once a moratorium takes hold and the new connection charge income dries up, all future capital projects (such as replacing aging pipes) will need to be paid for by existing members through rates. Long term, that cost could be significant, but it will depend in large part on the timing of projects that are scheduled 10 years or more in the future.

With this in mind the Board of Trustees are investigating several alternatives:

1. We commissioned a rate study that would forecast monthly water rate increases if fees from new connections are no longer available (in a moratorium).
2. We are in negotiations with the City of North Bend regarding a contract to purchase water from the City to supply the Urban Growth Area (UGA) within Sallal and to sell water to the City for stream flow mitigation purposes. The idea is that we would buy water from the City during the rainy months when they don't need to mitigate, and we would sell them mitigation water during the dry months when the river needs the mitigation water and if none is available from the City's primary mitigation source, Seattle Public Utilities. It's all about the timing. Your Board will only sign a contract that is in the best interest of this Association. If such a deal can't be made, we won't do it. If we do succeed in negotiating a fair contract, we will present it to members before we sign it. Ensuring that our members continue to have safe and sufficient water at reasonable rates is our top priority.
3. For the same reasons that we are investigating a contract with the City, Sallal is also investigating the possibility of securing an additional water right for itself. In 2001, Sallal

	<p>submitted an application with Department of Ecology (DOE) for an additional 326-acre feet of water per year. The application was set aside as no new water rights were being considered by DOE. In October of 2019, DOE contacted Sallal to let us know they are now prepared to process our application and confirmed that we wanted to move forward. To this end, we have interviewed two hydrogeologic consulting firms to determine the feasibility and associated costs, and selected Aspect Consulting to develop the scope of work. The DOE, this month, issued us a preliminary permit to pursue this water right. Moving forward with this application will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and given the current state of the law, it will not be approved unless the impacts of additional withdrawals on the river can be fully mitigated. As we all know, finding mitigation sources in the Valley is challenging and expensive. The Board will continue to review this option and weigh the costs against the likelihood of success, as well as considering the long-term costs to members for mitigation.</p>
Chlorination	<p>Several Sallal board members, General Manager, and engineer consultant met with Department of Health (DOH) representatives on June 9th to better understand whether a return to untreated water is feasible and would be allowed. Information provided by DOH made it clear that the possibility for successfully returning to untreated water will be very challenging based on our historical water quality and the amount of work and costs involved of designing a new water quality maintenance program. DOH made it clear that the overall risks involved to both the association and members of returning to an unchlorinated system would be substantial. One adverse water quality event could retrigger chlorination.</p> <p>We know this is an important issue to many members. We are planning to hold a member meeting on this topic in September to explain all that we've learned on this issue as well as provide updates on what we are doing to keep your drinking water safe. More details on the meeting will be provided as they become available.</p>
Billing Questions and Issues	<p>Due to the pandemic, Sallal is not charging penalties nor pursuing any shutoffs for non-payment. However, our policy is that members must pay something every month. We are seeing many people who are just not paying their bills, and this will result in shutoffs once the Governor's order for the pandemic is lifted. This would be an unfortunate outcome that we'd like to help you avoid so please contact us to make arrangements now.</p> <p>Office staff have received many phone calls from members asking why their checks have not cleared the bank yet, when they mailed it a week ago. Please be advised, if you are paying from your bank bill pay, your bank cuts a post-dated check and mails the check to Sallal. You must initiate this by the 10th of the month to increase the likelihood that Sallal will receive it by the due date of the 21st of the month.</p> <p>Office staff have observed that Internet provider seemed to have tightened up their spam filters, so some members are not receiving their e-billing. If you haven't received your bill by the 5th of the month, please call or e-mail the office to provide your account number and it will be resent. We ask for your patience during this challenging time, as we are also in the middle of migrating to a new billing system.</p>
Member Advisory Committee	<p>Sallal's Member Advisory Committee (MAC) has openings! If you are interested in helping advise the Sallal Board, are a member in good standing, are able to attend the monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and are prepared to put the best interests of the Association first, please send your letter of interest and a short Bio to Ted@sallal.com to be considered.</p>