



Culver Water Rates Increasing Next Month

At its regular meeting on September 11, 2025, the Culver Town Council adopted a water rate increase following several months of discussion and a public hearing July 25. This is the first increase since 2015 and follows an updated rate study by the consulting firm Baker Tilly, which was commissioned to evaluate whether the town's current water and sewer rates can support the costs of maintaining and operating the systems.

The new rate increase will be reflected on the January 2026 bill, due February 15, 2026.

Background on Rate Studies

The original rate study was completed in 2021, and at that time, Baker Tilly recommended a rate increase. However, the council opted to delay any changes as the community was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, the study was updated again, but no action was taken.

In early 2025, Clerk-Treasurer Karen Heim requested another update to reflect new revenue projections, including the impact of additional housing developments at the Dunes. Baker Tilly's report showed that a water rate increase was necessary. It should be noted that factoring in the revenue from the Dunes reduced the recommended rate increase by approximately 50%.

Sewer rates remain unchanged.

Rate Changes

Below is a breakdown of the proposed changes to monthly utility bills for residential customers with a standard 5/8" meter. These bills include water, sewer, stormwater, and trash services.

Water Usage (gallons)	Current Bill	Proposed Bill	Increase
1,000	\$63.31	\$90.22	\$26.91
2,000	\$68.55	\$95.46	\$26.91
3,000	\$81.50	\$114.82	\$33.32
4,000	\$94.47	\$134.17	\$39.70
5,000	\$107.44	\$153.52	\$46.08



*The chart shows the entire utility bill which includes water, sewer, trash, and storm water.

Financial Background

The town has an outstanding water bond issued in 2015, which will be fully paid by 2036. The bond ordinance mandates that the utility maintains a minimum reserve of \$525,521. As of the end of 2024, the reserve stood at \$498,749.

Over the past five years, the town's average annual water income has been \$543,576, while expenses have averaged slightly higher at \$544,255. Rising operational costs have placed pressure on the water fund, reinforcing the need for a rate adjustment.

For those interested in more detailed financial information, income and spending reports are available on the Indiana Gateway website: www.gateway.ifionline.org.

Infrastructure and Regulatory Requirements

Maintaining reserves is essential to cover routine repairs and emergency costs, such as unexpected water leaks. In addition to standard system and water tower maintenance, the Town is now obligated to replace certain water service lines.

Following the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, the Environmental Protection Agency has mandated that municipalities identify and replace lead service lines. Culver completed its lead service line inventory in 2024 and is required to replace 10% of the identified lines annually for the next decade. With approximately 180 lines to replace, the Town has already incorporated these expenses into future budgeting.

Council's Perspective

"Increasing rates is not something the council takes lightly," said Council President Bill Cleavenger. "We know many of our residents are on fixed incomes and will feel the impact of any increase. However, we are committed to responsibly providing safe, reliable water service to our community."

ORDINANCE 2025-008

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND RESTATING ORDINANCE 2016-017, 2014-010, 2008-010, and 2022-004 BEING THE ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING RATES AND CHARGES FOR THE USE OF AND SERVICES RENDERED BY THE WATERWORKS SYSTEM OF THE TOWN OF CULVER

WHEREAS, the Culver Town Council, finds that existing rates and charges for the use of and service rendered by the waterworks of said town are insufficient to enable the Town to properly operate its waterworks plant, to provide funds for depreciation, to provide funds necessary for plant replacements, improvements, extensions and betterments, as set forth under I.C. 8-1.5-3-8, and that the existing rates and charges should be increased on an "across-the-board" basis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CULVER INDIANA, as follows that:

Section 1: There shall be and there hereby are established for the use of and the service rendered by the waterworks system of the Town of Culver, the following rates and charges to be established and effective with the January 2026 bill, due February 15, 2026, based on the use of water supplied by said waterworks system:

Metered Rates

<u>Consumption Per Month</u>	<u>Rate</u>
First 2,000 Gallons	\$15.39
Next 4,000 Gallons	\$13.19
Next 27,000 Gallons	\$11.01
Next 67,000 Gallons	\$8.79
Next 100,000 Gallons	\$6.53
Over 200,000 Gallons	\$4.38

Minimum Charges

Each user shall pay a minimum charge in accordance with the following applicable size of meter installed, for which the user will be entitled to the quantity of water set out in the above schedule of rates.

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Usage</u>	<u>Rate</u>
5/8 – 3/4 inch meter	2,000 gallons	\$30.78
1 inch meter	3,843 gallons	\$55.09
1-1/2 inch meter	6,719 gallons	\$91.46
2 inch meter	11,635 gallons	\$145.57
3 inch meter	19,969 gallons	\$237.31
4 inch meter	31,694 gallons	\$366.37

6 inch meter 56,236 gallons \$584.93

Each user shall, in addition to the charges set forth above, also pay a monthly charge for public fire protection based on the following size of meter installed:

Fire Protection

<u>Meter Size</u>	<u>Rate</u>
5/8 – 3/4 inch meter	\$7.86
1 inch meter	\$19.57
1-1/2 inch meter	\$45.40
2 inch meter	\$80.23
3 inch meter	\$179.95
4 inch meter	\$320.81
6 inch meter	\$719.89

<u>Fire Protection Service (per annum)</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Public hydrant (each)	\$1,320.57
Private hydrant (each)	\$1,320.57

Any property owner who installs fire protection service to a building shall also, at such property owner's cost and expense, install a meter for such fire protection service.

<u>Private Fire Protection (per annum)</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Extinguishing fires only	\$2,198.98

Tap Charge

A tap charge shall be collected from each customer, prior to connection to the water system in an amount sufficient to reimburse the Town for the labor plus material which includes:

1. Tapping the main and installation of service from the main to the curb stop.
2. The cost of furnishing and installing a suitable water meter.

Multiple dwelling units shall be charged a tap fee for each living unit, regardless of the number of taps made. The charge for a 5/8-3/4 inch installation shall be in the amount of \$1100. The charge for a one (1) inch meter shall be in the amount of \$1,300.

The charge for a two (2) inch or larger meter shall be the labor and material costs incurred. Said charge will be calculated each time a meter larger than two (2) inch is installed.

Turn-On Fee

A fee of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) shall be charged for the turning on of the Town water after the same has been turned off at the request of the property owner together with a Fifty Dollar (\$50.00) fee for the turning off said water at the request of the property owner. Such fee shall not be charged if the reason for requesting the same to be turned off is to make an emergency repair. In addition, a fee of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) shall be charged for the turning off of the Town water and a fee of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) shall be charged for turning Town water back on if water service has been disconnected for failure to pay, which amount shall be paid to the Town Clerk before said water is turned on or reconnected.

Temporary Users

Water furnished to temporary users, such as contractors, circuses, etc. shall be charged based on the meter-gallon rates hereinbefore set forth as estimated and established by the waterworks superintendent. An application for the purchase of bulk water is available at Town Hall and must be completed prior to purchase.

New Meter Charge (Sprinkler Meters)

Residents requesting a separate sprinkler meter at the same address as an existing water meter will be charged for the purchase of the sprinkler meter according to rates established in Appendix A. The resident is required to contract the installation of the new meter with a private contractor.

Water Meter Damage

Property owners are responsible for the cost of a meter replacement when it ceases to work due to freezing. Property owners are additionally responsible for the cost of the radio read replacement if it is discarded or physically damaged.

Collection and Deferred Payment Charge

All bills for water service not paid within fifteen (15) days from the due date thereof, as stated in such bills, shall be subject to a collection or deferred payment charge of 10% on the first \$3.00 and 3% on the excess over \$3.00.

Billing

The Town shall bill the customer monthly in accordance with the rates and charges herein set forth.

Non-Recurring Charges

The Town shall charge customers for non-recurring charges as follows:

<u>Deposit:</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Residential	\$100
Non-Residential	\$150.00
Reconnection charge	\$50.00

Returned Payments / Dishonored Check / ACH Transactions

Dishonored Payment Defined. If a payment by check, electronic funds transfer (ACH), draft, or similar instrument is returned, refused, or dishonored by a financial institution for any reason (including insufficient funds, closed account, stop-payment, etc.), the payment shall not be considered as payment toward the utility bill.

Fee Assessment. The utility shall assess the customer:

(1) A flat service fee of \$10 (to be set by ordinance or fee schedule), plus all bank, processor, or other financial institution fees incurred by the municipality as a result of the dishonored or returned payment;

(2) Any other legal penalties or late payment charges as provided by other applicable ordinances or state statutes.

Billing. The returned payment fee and associated bank/financial institution charges shall be added to the customer's utility account and appear as a separate line item on the subsequent bill.

Section 2. All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 3. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage.

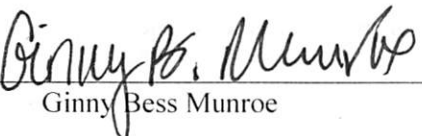
Executed this 11th day of September, 2025.

TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN OF CULVER, INDIANA

By 
William Cleavenger, President

By 
Sally Ricciardi, Vice-President

By _____
Justin Croy

By 
Ginny Bess Munroe

By 
Dana Neer

ATTESTED BY:


Karen Heim, Clerk-Treasurer

APPENDIX A

5/8 – 3/4 NEW METER CHARGE

The charge for a new 5/8 – 3/4 meter as described in this ordinance under “New Meter Charge” shall be \$225 per meter, based off of current costs for the required materials at the time of adoption. This fee shall be subject to periodic review based on the cost of materials.

CHARGES FOR LARGER METERS

New meter charges for meters larger than 5/8 – 3/4 will be calculated at the time of request and shall be for the actual cost of materials as determined by the Town Utility Superintendent.