

## **Van Buren Public Water System Rate Increases UPDATE August 1, 2024**

August 01, 2024

City of Van Buren Public Water System Rate effective August 1, 2024

Message from the City of Fort Smith:

### ***WATER RATE INCREASE EFFECTIVE TODAY***

*A water rate increase approved by the City of Fort Smith Board of Directors on July 11, 2024, becomes effective today. Customers will begin seeing the increase on their September bills. The increase will cover operating and maintenance costs, help pay off existing debt, and meet the required debt coverage to comply with bond agreements.*

Message from the City of Van Buren Municipal Utilities:

Like the majority of water systems in the area, the City of Van Buren purchases treated water from the City of Fort Smith. Van Buren purchases an average of 4.8 million gallons per day. Pursuant to the 1983 Agreement between the two cities, Van Buren should only be allocated costs associated with the Impoundment, Treatment, and Transmission of water delivered to Van Buren, and should not pay for costs associated with the City of Fort Smith Water Distribution System or Sewer System. The rate increases effective today, August 1, 2024, will increase Van Buren's cost of purchasing water by approximately \$2.5 million dollars per year, or around 75%, increasing the monthly charge to Van Buren's Average Residential Water User (4,000 gallons) by about \$8.30. There will likely also be an increase in the cost of purchasing water from Fort Smith sometime in 2025. The cost of purchasing water has not increased since 2011. Significant increases in the costs of treating water since 2011, and the need for upgrading the Water Treatment Plant and aging Water Transmission Line are primary drivers of these increases.

Van Buren Residential Sanitation Agreement: The existing Agreement between Van Buren and Waste Management of Arkansas will expire on December 31, 2024. In June the program was advertised for competitive bids. Three bids were received for Automated Collection utilizing Contractor provided carts for both Solid Waste (garbage) and Recycling Collection. NO bids were received for a traditional Manual Collection system. The Residential Sanitation Agreement was awarded to the low bidder, CARDS River Valley, beginning January 1, 2025. Information regarding the program and the transition process will be published in the near future and will include mail notifications with Van Buren Municipal Utility Bills.

Click here to view the [City of Van Buren Average Residential Municipal Utilities Bill](#) Summary (the summary will be mailed with August Bills).