



C O U N T Y O F L A M O I L L E

L A M O I L L E C O U R T H O U S E

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P.O. Box 490 - 154 Main Street  
Hyde Park, Vermont 05655-0490

JOEL PAGE

Assistant Judge

November 4, 2020

Lamoille County Legislators  
Lamoille County Selectboards  
Lamoille County Town Administrators

MADELINE MOTTA

Assistant Judge

ANNE CONWAY

County Clerk

Re: Impact of Village of Hyde Park Immense Increase in Utility Fees

Dear Lamoille County Legislators, Lamoille County Selectboard Members and Town Administrators:

As Lamoille County Assistant Judges, we are responsible for the County budget, which is driven primarily by the costs to maintain and operate the Lamoille County courthouse and the Sheriff's office building. We are writing to alert you to a huge utility fee increase that the Village of Hyde Park has imposed on the County (and the Lamoille North Supervisory Union and School District) that will impact Lamoille County taxpayers.

Beginning with the October 2020 water bill, the Village has increased the County water meter fees from approximately \$350/year to over \$34,000/year (approximately a 10,000% increase). Starting with the May 2021 wastewater bill, the Village is increasing the County's wastewater meter fees from \$420/year to over \$21,000/year (approximately a 5,000% increase).

Unless the fee schedule is immediately revised, Lamoille County will be paying about \$55,000/year in water/wastewater meter fees to the Village of Hyde Park. It is important to note that the fee increase is not related to usage.

The one other entity on the Village water system that is receiving similar treatment is the Hyde Park Elementary School and the Lamoille North Supervisory Union and School District (LNSU/SD). They have one meter (while the County has two meters) and the LNSU/SD will see a fee increase for water/wastewater of approximately \$27,000/year. In total, the Village has set water/wastewater fees that the taxpayers of Lamoille County and LNSU/SD pay by over \$80,000 per year, for three (3) meters, unrelated to usage. These costs will be transferred directly to taxpayers. For example, the town of Stowe, which pays over half of the County taxes, will see a County tax increase of over \$25,000.

The Assistant Judges, as fiduciaries of County funds and acting on behalf of the County, are contesting these unconscionable fee increases. The Assistant Judges will be addressing the Village of Hyde Park Board of Trustees at their November 11<sup>th</sup> board meeting, being held via Zoom at 7:00 pm. While the Trustees may have broad discretionary power in setting utility rates, it is the County's position

that the fee schedules that they have adopted are disproportionate, unreasonable, and unfair.

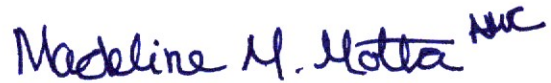
We are alerting you about the situation because it will have a direct effect on your budgets and, ultimately, Lamoille County taxpayers. These fee increases are substantial and will occur year after year, unless the County and stakeholders reach an equitable resolution with the Village Trustees. We are still hopeful that discussions with the Village will lead to a reasonable, proportionate fee schedule, without the County resorting to litigation. Any assistance that you can provide in these discussions is appreciated. Please join us at the Trustees' Zoom meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Details for joining the Zoom meeting are contained on the Village of Hyde Park home page, which can be accessed at <https://www.villageofhydepark.com>.

Feel free to contact either Assistant Judges if you have any questions. Joel Page can be reached at 802-730-3181. Madeline Motta can be reached at 802-461-9387.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Joel W. Page in blue ink, with the initials "AJC" written in the upper right corner of the signature.

Joel W. Page  
Lamoille County Assistant Judge

Handwritten signature of Madeline M. Motta in blue ink, with the initials "AJC" written in the upper right corner of the signature.

Madeline M. Motta  
Lamoille County Assistant Judge

cc: Deborah Clark, Business Manager  
LNSU/SD