



Village Hall

5127 Oakton Street
Skokie, Illinois 60077

Phone (847) 673-0500
Fax (847) 673-0525

www.skokie.org
SkokieVision Municipal Cable
1660 AM Skokie

Council-Manager Government

Mayor	George Van Dusen
Clerk	Pramod C. Shah
Trustees	Michele L. Bromberg Karen Gray-Keeler Ralph Klein Randall E. Roberts Edie Sue Sutker Ilonka Ulrich
Manager	John T. Lockerby
Counsel	Michael M. Lorge

Awards and Distinctions

All America City Finalist

American Public Works Association
(APWA) Accreditation

Center for Public Safety Excellence
(CPSE)

Gold Level Clean Air Counts
Community

Governor's Hometown Award

Government Finance Officers
Association Budget Award

Government Finance Officers
Association Certificate of
Achievement for Excellence in
Financial Reporting

Illinois Law Enforcement
Accreditation (ILEAP)

Insurance Services Office (ISO)
Class One Fire Department

State of Illinois Certified Health
Department

Tree City U.S.A. Distinction

Village of Skokie

October 17, 2017

Skokie Assures Residents That Water Is Safe After Evanston Cuts Safety Services While Seeking Rate Increase

In an attempt to solve its \$11 million budget shortfall, the City of Evanston on September 26, 2017, filed a lawsuit against the Village of Skokie to force Skokie taxpayers to pay wholesale water rates beginning October 1, 2017, that are nearly **91 percent higher** than the current rate and **164 percent higher** than the water rate that Evanston just gave to the Villages of Morton Grove and Niles.

On September 28, 2017, Evanston took more drastic action against Skokie residents by informing Skokie that on October 1, 2017, Evanston would cease providing Skokie with water quality testing and pump maintenance services. "Water quality testing is critical to ensuring a safe water system for our residents. It is one of the most important services provided to the community," said Skokie Health Director Dr. Catherine Counard. "To give only 72 hours' notice that this vital public health protection would be terminated was extremely irresponsible of Evanston officials, leaving the Village in a precarious position." Through the efforts of the Skokie Health and Public Works Departments, replacement inspection and maintenance services are in place to assure safe water delivery in Skokie.

"The Village of Skokie assures Skokie business and residential water customers that water service will continue uninterrupted and that water will continue to adhere to the highest water quality standards," said Skokie Village Manager John Lockerby.

The 91 percent water rate hike is a distorted application of a method to setting water rates for privately owned, for-profit water utilities, and demonstrates Evanston's deceitful approach to Skokie's attempts to negotiate a fair price for this essential service, according to Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen. He added, "The Village of Skokie is examining all options for responding to Evanston's actions which are clearly a result of its recently acknowledged budget distress with a \$6 million budget deficit. In addition, Evanston uses more than \$5 million in revenue each year from inflated water charges to its own residents as a hidden property tax, transferring revenue from its water fund to support myriad projects and programs unrelated to water service. The actual Evanston budget deficit is \$11 million. We will vigorously defend Skokie taxpayers against Evanston's actions and will look at alternate sources that can provide water to our community."

The Village of Skokie has purchased water from Evanston since 1944, and the two communities have worked cooperatively to provide a safe, reliable, cost-effective water service. For the past two years, Skokie has attempted to negotiate with Evanston in good faith to determine a fair wholesale water rate with the onset of a new contract to begin in 2017.

"It is shocking that, in the middle of ongoing negotiation meetings, Evanston would take such reckless and hostile actions which strain the relationship between our communities," said Skokie Corporation Counsel Michael M. Lorge. "The simultaneous filing of Evanston's complaint the day after its City Council approved an outrageous wholesale water rate hike belies any interest in intergovernmental cooperation. This complaint was not drafted overnight; over the past few months, Evanston made abrupt excuses to cancel negotiating meetings while secretly drafting legal action and dropped it on us in a manner designed to damage the Village."

"Evanston does not have the right to balance its City budget on the backs of Skokie residents," said Van Dusen. "There are consequences when neighbors take unilateral and oppressive actions designed to penalize its neighbors that have historically cooperated with and supported their community."

Updates regarding this matter will be posted at skokie.org when available.

###