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Oldham sewer customers could see rates rise 25 percent

By Andrea Uhde
auhde@courier-journal.com

About 5,700 customers of the Oldham County Sewer District could face rate increases of around 25 percent to help the district deal with its \$16 million debt, county treasurer Stan Clark said today.

The increase is part of a proposed solution approved 8-1 by Fiscal Court today. It also calls for La Grange Utilities to take over operations of the district, and for Crestwood customers to no longer be part of it.

The resolution approved by Fiscal Court said a rate increase would be allowed as long as the county sewer district reduces its annual operating expenses by \$400,000 and restructures its debt payments into a 30-year plan instead of the current 10-year plan, Clark said.

The rate increase would not affect residents on the La Grange or Crestwood systems, Clark said. Some district employees would lose their jobs, he said, but he wasn't sure who or how many.

Clark said Fiscal Court got involved because it has a \$3 million investment in the district, which it created years ago.

"If the sewer district fails, Fiscal Court would have to pay that," Clark said.

He said Fiscal Court's proposal is necessary "to keep the ship from sinking."

He said the rates for customers would have as much as doubled if the district had continued as it was.

"It's a small customer base with high administrative operating costs," Clark said.

He said the Sewer District board would still have to approve Fiscal Court's resolution. The resolution does not include a specific rate increase, but one will be discussed later.

Sewer District Board Chairman Dennis Deibel could not be reached tonight.

His brother, Magistrate Bob Deibel, was the lone opposition to the resolution.

"I just think it's a step in the wrong direction," he said, adding that he thought the increase would have to be more than 25 percent under the proposed plan.

Reporter Andrea Uhde can be reached at (502) 582-4663.
