

Dear Jonesborough residents and utility customers:

As we finish 2023 and look forward to 2024, we find our town facing the same challenges as homeowners and businesses, the rising cost of goods and services. According to the Associated Builders & Contractors since 2020 the overall cost of construction has risen 37.7%, caused mostly by huge increases in steel, iron, and concrete products. Consequently, these huge increases will raise the cost to expand, repair and replace our town's infrastructure and provide the necessary services for our community this year.

One essential infrastructure project will be improving our water and sewer system. This project began this past year by replacing aged meters with a more automated system but over the next 4 years an estimated \$40 million will be allocated to build a new \$35 million water treatment plant and \$5 million in water and sewer line projects. This budget year we also have critical street and sidewalk projects planned such as widening and paving of N. Cherokee out to the new school site, repaving Boone Street and replacing multiple aged sidewalks due to deterioration. These types of projects will ensure the community's future is more secure and safer for decades to come.

Your Jonesborough town government has always been good stewards of our tax dollars with rare increases, which is why we've always had one of the lowest property tax rates in the region, especially for municipalities that offer a wide range of services. This year will be no different, even after a \$0.25 increase we will again be lower than surrounding cities in our region and state. See example below.

Jonesborough	\$1.45	Bristol	\$1.98
Greeneville	\$2.46	Elizabethton	\$1.65
Kingsport	\$1.99	Erwin	\$1.53
Johnson City	\$1.98		

Our General Fund budget this year of \$12 million about equals last year, but we will be using more local funds (cash) instead of borrowing. To illustrate our financial stewardship and economic strength, our Property tax collections will total \$2.69 million this year, enough to only fund our Police department and part of our Fire department. Our robust sales tax collections by our business partners and state funds account for most of the remaining revenue. An interesting fact is the town of Jonesborough also helps fund Washington County and Johnson City School systems, estimated to be \$2.8 million of our sales tax dollars this year, \$1.45 million to the county and \$1.35 million to Johnson City.

To help fund the \$40 million water and sewer system improvements mentioned earlier there must be slight increases as well. As we learned last winter during the extreme freeze, water system stability is critical to our community. The Inside and Outside water & sewer fees will rise \$6 and \$10 respectively. Effective July 1 the Garbage & Recycling collection fee will be \$17.50 (\$2 increase with the same cost per tote per pickup) for city customers, which will also help purchase an additional collection truck (estimated at \$400k) in the future.

Lastly, we the Board of Mayor & Alderman volunteer our time, to ensure our town government strives to serve the community with excellence. I'm certain no other town our size can offer the amenities we do, with such a low cost of living. All of us volunteers, residents, visitors, and employees have helped create a beautiful town, where we are called to protect its historic past, preserve its structures, promote a patriotic identity, in a safe, welcoming environment for all.

Best Regards



Mayor, Chuck Vest