



West Leechburg Borough Newsletter

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Borough Infrastructure Projects

In 2023, the borough was able to accomplish several important infrastructure projects, big and small.

Borough funds were used to seal coat all of Edgewood Drive, Zdina Street, Shirley Drive, and Graham Place as well as portions of Giron Street, Summit Street, Woodland Drive, Eight Street, and Jantosik Street. This seal coat will preserve these streets for years to come.

Community Development Block Grant funds from Westmoreland County were used to fund the installation of new handicap parking spaces at the park/borough building and to make accessibility improvements in the area including repaving that section of the parking lot and installing a new sidewalk in front of the building.

In addition to these larger

projects, the public works crew spent the summer on a variety of projects including rebuilding Hemlock Street, drainage installation on Zdina Street, installing and maintaining storm and sanitary sewers, and regular maintenance activities.

Solar Panel Savings

In the summer of 2022, the borough installed 38 solar panels on the roof of the borough garage. The panels entered service in the last two days of August, 2022 once all connections to West Penn Power's system were completed.

Through the November,

2023 billing period, the solar panels have saved the borough just over \$3,600.

The panels were funded using federal funds and funds from a one time revenue source, meaning no borough tax dollars were spent to generate these savings.



Sanitary Sewer User Fee

At the August, 2023 Council Meeting, ordinance 332 was enacted to establish a sanitary sewer user fee in West Leechburg beginning January 1, 2024.

The fee will be set at \$40 per equivalent dwelling (EDU) unit per quarter. EDU is a technical term that, essentially, means one household or apartment. The number of EDUs for an address was established by a study by the Kiski Valley Water Pollution Control Authority (KVVWPCA). This fee only applies to residents connected to public sewer systems, not those who may still have septic systems.

Billing for this fee will be carried out by the KVVWPCA on behalf of the borough. This means residents will now receive two separate bills from the KVVWPCA for every quarter. One bill will be for services provided by KVVWPCA. This is the bill you are already receiving. The second bill will be for West Leechburg's sewer user fee.

The intention is for West Leechburg's bills to be issued at the end of each quarter. Initially, bills will only be payable by check. Additional payment methods may be added in the future. All payments will have to be mailed to KVVWPCA, no payments will be accepted at the borough building or through other methods you may use for your regular KVVWPCA bill.

To read the full ordinance, please see: <https://ecode360.com/WE4239>

Why is this fee being enacted?

Much of the borough owned sewer system is reaching the end of its functional life. Terracotta sewer lines and brick manholes are developing defects. Groundwater is infiltrating sewer lines and manholes, increasing the amount of water through the system, causing backups and additional treatment costs. Necessary repair projects have been estimated in the hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. When the borough seeks grant money or low interest loans, it needs a source of funding to match these grants and loans.

I already pay a sewage bill. Why isn't all of this covered already?

The sewer bill already paid by many residents covers the costs incurred by the Kiski Valley Water Pollution Control Authority for transmitting and treating sewage. This includes pump stations and the main sewer treatment plant.

KVVWPCA does not maintain the sanitary sewer lines inside the borough. Those lines are the responsibility of the borough and they are now facing the variety of issues outlined above.

How was the fee amount determined?

The borough took into account a variety of factors when determining the fee, including: the current loan costs of previous sewer repairs, the current cost of maintenance to the sewer system, pro-

jected costs for additional sewer maintenance (including additional maintenance projects and increased engineering fees), and building a reserve fund to cover future emergency repairs or match potential grant funding. A total was then added up and divided by the number of billable EDUs. This fee was also compared to surrounding municipalities and was lower than many other Kiski Valley communities.

You talked about repair estimates. Please provide examples.

A recent estimate to completely replace sewer lines on Bosin Street and half of James Street came in at \$1.2 million. A cheaper alternative, to line the pipes (which is not always possible based on the condition of the pipes), was estimated at \$237,000. This is significantly cheaper, but still beyond the current means of the borough.

A recent emergency repair to a manhole and sewer line located in the park cost \$20,000. This repair was on a relatively short sewer line that was not that deep and in an easy place to dig (no street to dig in).

See part 2 on Page 3.

What about applying for grant money?

The borough has applied for grant money. For example, the borough was awarded a grant from the county for \$78,870 to be used for a sewer on Gosser Street. The borough was required to provide a match of over \$27,000 for the project. Grants like this typically require matches and the borough will use the new fee to provide matching funds

Sewer User Fee, Part 2

for future grants.

The borough also applied for grant funds in December 2022 to work on the previously mentioned Bosin/James Street project. As of December 2023, the state hasn't even decided who will receive that grant money. So we are left waiting.

Further, PennVEST, a state agency that provides grants and loans was asked why

the borough is never offered grants. We were told we had to prove rates would increase if there was no grant. Because the borough didn't have a sewer user fee, we couldn't prove rates would increase and could never qualify for grants.

Why now?

The borough's sewer

system has multiple defects, including areas that are known to have sags, allow major water infiltration, or have design issues. Working to fix these issues now will prevent worse issues (collapses, blockages) in the future. Council is choosing to be proactive and address the issue now.

Burning Reminders

As a reminder to all residents, the following regulations apply when burning in the borough.

- **ONLY WOOD** or **WOOD PRODUCTS** (ex: boxes or paper) may be burned.
- No burning between dusk and dawn. All fires must be completely extinguished (no smoking or smoldering) by sunset.
- Only cooking fires (those for picnics or cookouts) may burn on Sundays and Mondays. **NO** garbage fires on Sundays or Mondays.
- **DO NOT** burn tires.
- You must burn in a non-combustible container with a screen on top. No open pits.
- If you need to burn on a large scale, you must obtain a permit from Fire Chief Chris Swank who can be reached at 724-980-4761. There is no permit fee, but the permit will be issued for a specific day and time.
- Please consider the effects the smoke you create has on your neighbors and be considerate of them.



Garbage Collection

The borough contracts with Bankosh Sanitation for collection every Tuesday. Please take note of the following regulations/requirements.

- Each residence is limited to 3 thirty (30) gallon garbage bags.
- Anyone with additional garbage must contact Bankosh at (724) 461-4185 to pay for and obtain stickers allowing for extra garbage.
- Please place garbage at the street on Monday night, Bankosh starts early on Tuesday.
- The garbage collector has final discretion over what they collect.

Garbage Ordinance

Stormwater Management

In July, ordinance 331 was enacted regulating the keeping of garbage and junk in the borough.

This ordinance requires that garbage be placed in a receptacle with a closed lid and not placed at the curb until the time of collection.

Additionally, the keeping of rubbish and junk is prohibited. (Examples (not a com-

plete list): papers, rags, cartons, boxes, wood, rubber, leather, plastic, tin cans, metals, mineral matter, glass, crockery.)

For the full text of the ordinance please contact the borough office or visit: <https://ecode360.com/WE4239>

In 2021, West Leechburg was required to pass a stormwater management ordinance. Please be aware that under the terms of this ordinance, building projects you may undertake (new houses, driveways, and others) may require a stormwater management permit.

Feel free to contact the borough office for information on this process.

Borough Communications

The borough shares information using its website (westleechburg.us) and Facebook page.

The Facebook page is used for regular updates regarding a variety of news items such as changes to borough office hours, ongoing construction

projects, and general town information.

The website is used for news and information. It also has a list of borough documents including policies, permits, and meeting agendas. An up-to-date list of contact information for borough officials and

services is also included.

Please like our Facebook page or check our website for regular news items and updates.

West Leechburg Crime Watch

The West Leechburg Crime Watch is a group of residents who aim to create safety through community awareness and partnership with our local police and neighbors.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month (except December) at 7pm in the Borough Building (place is

subject to change).

For more information, please contact Christina (412-401-5954), Paulette (724-845-7013). And join us on Facebook at West Leechburg Crime Watch for crime updates, meetings, and other information.

Contact 911

For any emergencies in the borough, please contact 911. 911 will be able to correctly set you up with the appropriate help.

Using the borough police non-emergency number or direct dialing the state police barracks will NOT bring timely help.

Posting on Facebook pages/groups will definitely not bring help in a timely manner. Call 911.

Dye Tests

If any resident sells their house, it must be dye tested to prove it is properly connected to the sewer system. If a dye test is not provided, a municipal no lien letter will not be issued.

The dye test **MUST** be done by a borough authorized plumber, listed below. The test will not be accepted if it comes from another plumber.

You must use one of the following:

- L. Arnold & Sons
Phone: 724-224-4664
- Dion Garrett
Phone: 724-224-2900

Building Permits

When planning to construct new additions/ structures on your property (such as fences, sheds, decks, pools, garages, additions, etc.) please contact Building Inspection Underwriters (BIU) at the number provided.

BIU will determine what types of permits you might need and will guide you through the process of obtaining said permits.

Contact: Jason Krainbucher

724-523-5940 ext. 7503

Borough Office

The borough office can be contacted at 724-845-7359 or secretary@westleechburg.us.

If you want to visit in person, office hours are as follows:

- ◆ Monday 12pm-4pm
- ◆ Tuesday 7am-12pm
- ◆ Wednesday 7am-11am (closed 2nd Wednesday each month)
- ◆ Thursday 4pm-7pm
- ◆ Friday Closed

Clean-Up Days

Due to increasing costs, the borough will no longer be able to provide clean-up days for residents. Costs more than quadrupled from \$1200 to \$5000 on top of a regular garbage bill that increased by more than \$10,000.

Our garbage contractor, Bankosh Sanitation, sells stickers that may be placed on additional items/ large items of garbage for pickup.

To obtain stickers, please contact Bankosh Sanitation at (724) 461-4185 or stop by the borough office.

Yard Waste and Snow Soliciting

It is unlawful, and dangerous to discharge yard waste (leaves, grass clippings, etc.) or snow onto borough streets.

These discharges are prohibited as they create a hazard for road users, especially pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

Additionally, a new ordinance was passed in 2023 prohibiting the discharge of yard waste onto/into catch basins, ditch lines, and manholes within the borough.

This new regulation was created to prevent blockages and maintenance difficulties with the borough storm and sanitary sewer systems.

There is **NO** soliciting in the borough without a permit. Any individual, group, or business going from house to house must have a soliciting permit.

The permit will be issued by the mayor and may require a fee to be paid. Solicitors have to provide documentation to obtain the permit.

Residents should ask to see solicitation permits. If a solicitor does not have a permit, please notify the police department immediately. This is a safety and security measure for our community.

Looking for Volunteers: WLVFC

Seeking men and women 18 years or older and junior firefighters, ages 14 to 17 to serve their community!

Why volunteer for a fire company?

- 1) Enjoy helping others
- 2) Community Pride
- 3) Interested in public service
- 4) Enjoy Teamwork
- 5) Social interactions, picnics, banquets
- 6) Firefighter challenges

These are just a few of the many reasons to join! If you are interested in joining the West Leechburg Volunteer Fire Company or you want more information, please contact Chief Chris Swank at 724-980-4761 or stop at the borough building on any Monday at 6:30pm to pick up an application in person.