

Electric rates up or 'lights out'

By Randy Essex

Electric rates in Lincoln are on the way up, but the city council was not ready Monday to decide who will pay how much more.

The council tabled action for one week on a resolution that would raise the Lincoln Electric System residential use rate 6.7 percent and the rate for miscellaneous municipal use 9.9 percent.

Mayor Helen Boosalis asked for the one-week delay because the city expected only a 6 percent hike. Boosalis said city officials will discuss with LES the possibility of a smaller increase or will try to find a way to pay the unexpected increase with money in the present budget.

LES Administrator Walter Canney told the council the increases are fair and necessary. Canney said LES has little control over its financial needs.

When asked by Councilman Leo Scherer what services would be discontinued if the rates do not go up, Canney replied, "Nearly all."

"So you're saying we don't have any choice; either we approve it or the lights go out," Scherer said.

But Councilman Bob Jeambey said he welcomes the delay so he can be sure residential rates will not go up more than is fair.

Jeambey expressed concern over the fact that LES wants to increase residential rates more than any other category except miscellaneous municipal rates.

Canney said the rates reflect an attempt to eliminate inequities in the percentage of cost paid by consumers in each rate class. He said that the proposed hikes reflect the targets of a ten-year plan for LES approved by the council and the city administration.

Canney added that the increases are less than increases in the cost of living.

The LES budget makes up roughly two-thirds of the city budget, and will comprise even more of the budget if the 9.9 percent increase is passed.

But Canney told the council the increase may cost fewer dollars than they fear because the services in question include only minor electric needs such as service to water pumps.

The increase in residential rates will cost the average consumer \$1.55 per month, according to LES calculations.

However, persons living in one or two-bedroom all-electric apartments can expect to pay as much as 6.9 percent more, said Phil Euler, LES supervising engineer of rates.

Euler explained that 6.7 percent is only an aggregate figure for the residential increase. All-electric apartment dwellers would probably pay \$3 more during winter months and \$4 more in the summer if they have an air conditioner.

The resolution will go before the council again Monday. Public debate is allowed on all resolutions.

The council members will be better informed on LES' reasons for the amounts of increases as they will be supplied with a complete report on the matter.

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ASUN agenda


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|---|--|
| I. Call to order/roll call | (Rules governing student organizations) |
| II. Approval of minutes | Organic act No. 8 (Clerk of the student senate) |
| III. Appointments | Organic act No. 9 (ASUN commissions and bill evolution) |
| IV. Open forum | Amendment to Organic Act No. 5 (Cain) (regarding the College Advisory boards) |
| V. Committee reports | Amendment to Organic Act No. 5 (Yapp) (wording clarification) |
| Academic policy | VIII. New business |
| Budget & fees | Appropriations Bill No. 17 |
| Campus life | Senate Bill No. 34 (To Reappoint CSL members for judicial purposes only after December 31) |
| Special topics | IX. Announcements |
| Community relations | X. Adjournment |
| Constitutions | |
| Internal affairs | |
| VI. Old business | |
| Senate bill No. 29 (Union Board) | |
| Senate bill No. 31 (Student organization liability insurance) | |
| Senate bill No. 32 (Ad Hoc Committee to study proposed bylaw changes) | |
| Senate bill No. 33 | |

Wednesday Ladies' Night
9:00 - Closing

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