DELPHOS — Legislation concerning water and sewer rate increases was heard by Delphos City Council on first reading Monday.

A water rate increase of 2 percent plus the 2012 Consumer Price Index of 1.7 percent is proposed for the May 1, 2013, through April 30, 2014 billing and a rate increase of 2 percent plus the 2013 CPI is set for the billing period of May 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015.

Councilman Mark Clement asked Auditor Tom Jettinghoff to provide council a list of water customers using 800,001 cubic feet or more and customers using 500,001 to 800,000 cubic feet.

Council struck from the ordinance a rate increase of 2 percent plus the 2014 CPI for the billing period of May 1, 2015 through April 30, 2016, saying they would revisit the rates and determine if an increase is needed in January 2015.

“We need to look at our biggest users, our businesses who use a lot, and make sure we protect them so we can protect our citizens,” Clement said. “If we were to lose one of those big users, we would all be in trouble.”

A sewer rate increase of 5 percent plus the 2012 1.7 percent CPI is proposed for the May 1, 2013, through April 30, 2014, billing period with a review in January 2014.

Council also heard on first reading the appropriations budget for 2013. Total appropriations are $16,021,000 with $3,270,000 in the General Fund.

The Cass Street water line project is moving forward the first reading of an ordinance allowing the safety service director and/or mayor to enter into a contract with the successful bidder on the project. The project is estimated at $44,000 and funds will be appropriated from the Water

Improvement Fund. Bids will be opened on March 28.

Cass Street resident Mary Winhover spoke to council asking for an update and an approximate start date on the project.

“I have been coming to council for several years and I am getting frustrated,” Winhover said. “Now you are talking about a rate increase on water I can’t drink or cook with and I have to have my line flushed every two weeks. I just need to know when this is going to be taken care of.”

Safety Service Director Greg Berquist told Winhover the project should start in early Spring and be completed fairly quickly.

Council heard and passed on third reading legislation providing for a fund transfer from the General Fund to the Police & Fireman’s Pension funds to bring the specified funds from a deficient position in accordance with recommendation from the State of Ohio Auditor’s Office; and to amend the Police and Fire Pensions Funds in accordance with IRS regulations. The new requirements directs a tax-deferred amount of 10.75 percent on employee contributions to the fund to be channeled through a payroll deduction by the City to the Ohio Pension fund for the affected employees.

The city is revising its Flood Damage Reduction and Flood Plain Management regulations. Council heard on second reading an ordinance repealing certain sections of the former legislation adopted in 1995 and reinforcing other sections.

New Flood Insurance Rate Maps will go into effect on May 2. Some parcels now included in a the city’s flood plain may no longer be in the new flood plain and some who are not currently in a flood plain may be on the new map.

Berquist also told council the city is required to pass the legislation to become eligible for certain government funds, including reimbursement for storm cleanup, etc.

A public hearing for those who have questions regarding the new Flood Insurance Rate Map or the Flood Damage Reduction and Flood Plain Management regulations was held prior to Monday's council meeting.

In old business, Berquist reported he researched the city's repair history on water lines and found no indication the city has never fixed a lateral, which is on the resident's property, and they don't plan on doing it. The statement was in reference to a request by Menke Addition resident Mike Edlebrock that the city fix a water line problem on his property.

Edelbrock's sanitary sewer backed up into his home and when a plumber he hired to assess the situation put a camera through the line, it was found the wrong pipe with the wrong gauge was used and the sanitary sewer line was run through the storm sewer line and then repaired.

Edelebrock has spoke to council several times about the issue, stating he feels the city is responsible for fixing the problem with his sanitary sewer because the city signed off the on the property when it was annexed into the city.__PUBLIC__