



TriCo Regional Sewer Utility

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PERSONNEL & BENEFITS COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, August 26, 2020 @ 7:30 A.M.

Hensel Government Center

10701 N. College Avenue

Carmel, IN 46280

AGENDA

1. Public Comment
2. Safety Update
3. Cost of Living Adjustment Consideration
4. Review of Pandemic PTO / Work from Home practices
5. Office Unification Update
6. Other Business

Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 @ 7:30 A.M.



MEMORANDUM

To: P&B Committee
From: Loren Prange
Date: 8/17/2020
Subject: Safety Update

No injuries reported this month and we are at 3830 days without a loss time accident.

No safety tailgates are being performed during social distancing. Safety training has continued thru Safety Plus Web online.

WRRF staff along with the Engineering staff completed confined space training. Training was provided by Safety Resources.

Preventive maintenance was completed on two of the three air monitors. The air monitors received new sensors and was bump checked for accuracy. WRRF staff calibrate air monitors before each use and document that it passed before taken into field. If the monitor fails it will be taken out of service until repaired.

WRRF staff inspected safety harnesses and lanyards. Two harness and a lanyard are at the recommended replacement age and show some stressed areas. We ordered new equipment and are waiting for delivery.



MEMORANDUM

To: P&B Committee

From: Andrew Williams

Date: August 18, 2020

Subject: Cost of Living Adjustment

This coming year will be the third year that TriCo will be using the Step System. The attached table shows the positions and where each employee falls in their range as of 2020.

Per the Performance Management and Compensation Policy, an annual adjustment to the step system may be made at the Board's discretion. Last year when discussing the adjustment, the P&B Committee determined that they did not want to tie it to one specific data point. The CPI last year was 1.5% and the Committee felt that there should be something also given for the Utility's performance. The Committee settled on 1.5% for COLA and 1.5% for performance.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers show that over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 0.7% in the Midwest. The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.6% over the year. See the attached BLS News Release for more details.

The Committee will need to make a recommendation to the Board so that it will be included in the 2021 budget review.



For Release: Wednesday, August 12, 2020

20-1538-KAN

MOUNTAIN-PLAINS INFORMATION OFFICE: Kansas City, Mo.

Technical information: (816) 285-7000 BLSInfoKansasCity@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mountain-plains

Media contact: (816) 285-7000

Consumer Price Index, Midwest Region – July 2020

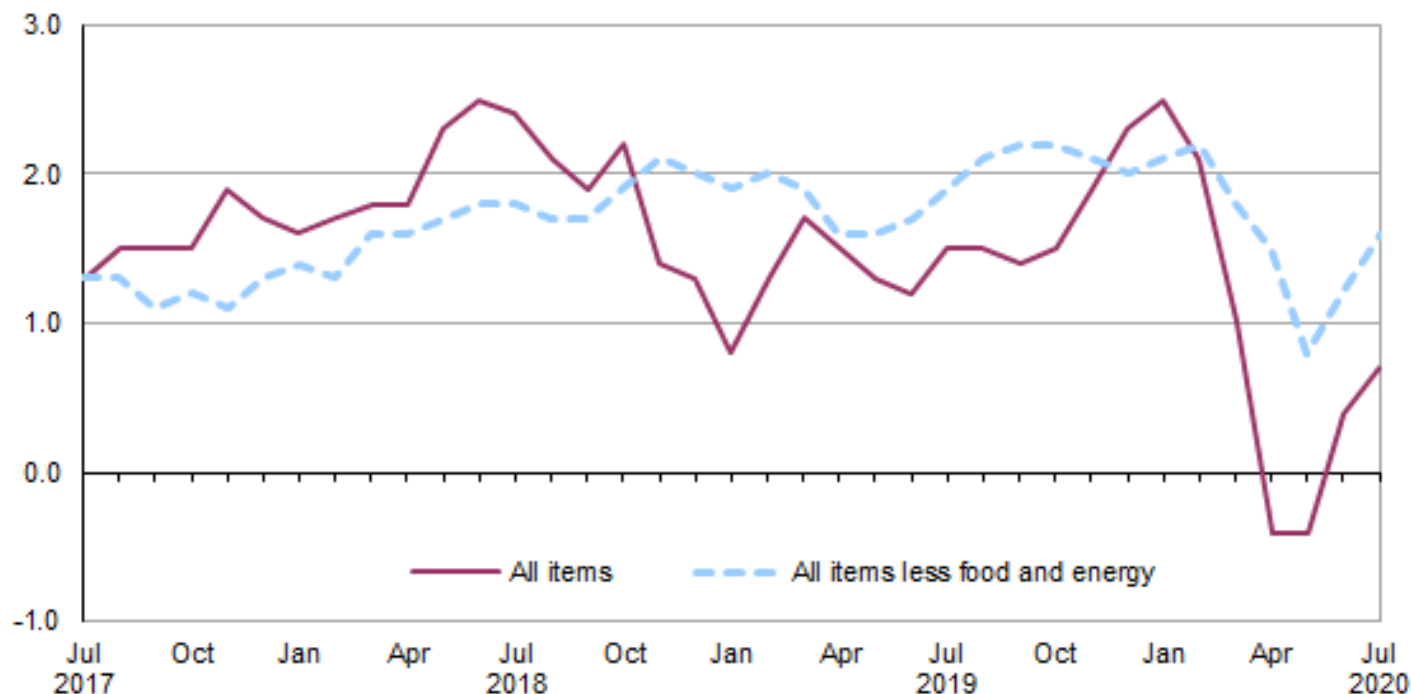
Area prices up 0.5 percent over the month and up 0.7 percent over the year

Prices in the Midwest Region, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), advanced 0.5 percent in July, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See [table A.](#)) The July increase was influenced by higher prices for motor fuel, as well as non-energy sub-components within transportation. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U increased 0.7 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A.](#)) The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.6 percent over the year. Food prices rose 3.4 percent. Energy prices fell 12.6 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1.](#))

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Midwest region, July 2017–July 2020

Percent change



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Food prices decreased 0.3 percent for the month of July. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home declined 1.0 percent, and prices for food away from home rose 0.7 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 3.4 percent. Prices for food at home advanced 4.3 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home increased 2.3 percent.

Energy

The energy index advanced 1.5 percent over the month. The increase was mainly due to higher prices for gasoline (3.9 percent). Prices for electricity rose 0.5 percent, while prices for natural gas service decreased 2.1 percent for the same period.

Energy prices fell 12.6 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-22.1 percent). Prices paid for electricity decreased 1.2 percent, and prices for natural gas service decreased 2.3 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.5 percent in July. Higher prices for motor vehicle insurance (11.2 percent) and new and used motor vehicles (2.1 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for recreation (-1.3 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.6 percent. Components contributing the most to the increase included shelter (2.0 percent) and medical care services (6.2 percent). Partly offsetting the increases was a price decrease in apparel (-6.8 percent).

Table A. Midwest region CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January.....	-0.3	0.8	0.7	2.2	0.4	1.6	-0.2	0.8	0.4	2.5
February.....	0.2	0.4	0.8	2.4	0.9	1.7	0.9	1.3	0.3	2.1
March.....	0.6	0.5	0.2	1.9	0.4	1.8	1.3	1.7	-0.5	1.0
April.....	1.1	0.8	0.5	1.8	0.6	1.8	0.9	1.5	-1.1	-0.4
May.....	0.8	0.8	0.4	1.4	0.9	2.3	0.6	1.3	0.3	-0.4
June.....	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.9	0.7	2.5	0.3	1.2	0.8	0.4
July.....	0.1	0.4	0.1	1.3	0.1	2.4	0.2	1.5	0.5	0.7
August.....	-0.3	0.6	0.3	1.5	-0.1	2.1	0.2	1.5		
September.....	0.4	1.1	0.5	1.5	0.1	1.9	0.0	1.4		
October.....	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.5	0.2	2.2	0.2	1.5		
November.....	-0.4	1.2	0.0	1.9	-0.5	1.4	0.0	1.9		
December.....	-0.2	1.8	0.0	1.7	-0.9	1.3	-0.2	2.3		

The August 2020 Consumer Price Index for the Midwest Region is scheduled to be released on Friday, September 11, 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on July 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in July was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices considered temporarily unavailable and imputed. While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at <https://www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm>.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments—department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Midwest region is comprised of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.



MEMORANDUM

To: P&B Committee
From: Andrew Williams
Date: August 18, 2020
Subject: Pandemic Paid Time Off

At the March Emergency Board Meeting the Board passed Ordinance 03-16-2020 to facilitate the ability of TriCo's employees to manage their work and family obligations should they be affected by the coronavirus and to help ensure that TriCo services are not disrupted and TriCo's interests are protected. This ordinance provided three weeks (112.5 hours) of paid leave for those who are sick with COVID-19, have been quarantined, are providing care for a family member with COVID-19 or are caring for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19. This ordinance was compliant with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) that was passed shortly thereafter; actually, providing more than was required. The Utility provided full pay for Pandemic PTO hours taken by those taking care of their minor children where as the FFCRA only required two-thirds pay.

TriCo's Employee Handbook does address a Medical Leave of Absence which is similar to the FMLA requirements, but TriCo is not covered by the FMLA. Therefore, the Ordinance did not address the FFCRA requirement to provide up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay, when an employee is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

We have had some employees ask what might TriCo do if schools are shut again this fall. I believe TriCo has been generous with the paid time off approved in the March Ordinance. Management has made extra efforts to provide employees the ability to work from home so that they can limit the use of their PTO and Pandemic PTO banks. Some employees have used all 112.5 hours of PPTO while others have not needed to use any time. Due to the uncertainty that the future holds, I wanted to discuss this matter with the Committee before any additional closures occur.