

Amy Johnson

From: Bruce Carnine <bcarnine@qwestoffice.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2018 12:29 PM
To: Peter Fernandez
Cc: Alicia Blalock
Subject: Surcharge

Dear Mr. Fernandez

Suburban East Salem Water District is currently subject to a 7.5% Surcharge that was enacted on whole sale customers outside of the city limits that in my understanding was to basically account for costs linked to the use of the water system.

It is my understanding that the current COSA calculations account for our fair share costs for using the City's water system to receive water for the District to our intake meters, therefore, I find no reason for the 7.5% Surcharge to be in place. This appears to be double charging the District for costs already accounted for in the COSA formula.

Suburban East Salem Water District would like to propose that a recommendation be made to discontinue this charge to the District and, adjust the upcoming proposed rates accordingly.

I also sent a formal letter through the mail to your office.

I will try do get meeting dates from our board meeting Monday so we can coordinate with you the next meeting for the contract.

Thank you,

Bruce Carnine, Manager
Suburban East Salem Water District
phone 503-364-1620 fax 503-364-8215

Amy Johnson

From: Susann Kaltwasser <susann@kaltwasser.com>
Sent: Monday, October 08, 2018 3:08 AM
To: citycouncil; Chuck Bennett; Steve Powers
Cc: Irma Dowd; CityRecorder
Subject: Testimony on water rate increase
Attachments: ELNA comments on water rates 10818.pdf

Attached are comments from the East Lancaster Neighborhood Association regarding the proposed increase in water rate. Please enter this into the record for the public hearing item 4.d on October 8, 2018.

In case the attachment does not open below is the text of the document.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Susann Kaltwasser
ELNA co-president

October 8, 2018

To:
Mayor Bennett and Salem City Councilors
From:
Susann Kaltwasser, co-president ELNA
RE:
Water-Sewer Rate Increase (Item 4.d)

The East Lancaster Neighborhood Association board discussed the proposed increase in water/sewer rates. While some members are not pleased with the increase, we did not take a position on the proposal.

Our concern is over the impact that this increase will have on low-income households and those on fixed incomes. The board feels that there needs to be an increase in the assistance program for utilities.

Currently there is only a small discount for qualifying elderly or disabled persons who are also low income. The board asks that the Council consider looking at expanding the program to include all low-income families, especially those with small children.

This past year we have seen a sharp increase in property taxes from the two City bonds and the School District bond that will increase the pressure on those people on fixed incomes. Adding to this was an increase to the garbage fee, and we understand there may be another increase in those fees soon. All of this adds up very quickly and puts pressure on people who are trying to stay in their homes.

We know that the members of the Council are not heartless, uncaring people. We know that you want to address important infrastructure needs, but we also know there should be a balance between the City's needs and the needs for people to be able to meet their personal needs and safety.

Water is not a luxury. It is an essential need of everyone.

The unintended consequences of raising City fees are sometimes hard to judge. It is even harder when there is not good data being collected. Some time ago it was reported to the City Council that approximately 150 households have their water turned off each month. There was not data on what those people did in order to get their service restored. Staff just assumes that 'most people eventual pay their bills.' But where that money comes from is not tracked. Staff refers people to other agencies, but there is no follow up to see if they got assistance.

From personal experience in helping some of these people who had their water turned off, I know that some are making very difficult decisions on where to get money to pay their water bill. Some people have to forgo getting their medications, paying for heat, or making the car payment, for example. Some families who are under the supervision of DHS - Children's Services have been told that without water and heat, their children will be put in foster care.

I know that the Council does not want to believe they are part of the problem for such people. I know that you want to be part of the caring community that helps people stay in their homes, meet their basic needs and have a life that is without undue stress.

Other cities in our area have a more comprehensive assistance program. All the ones that I researched have programs for not only the disabled and elderly low-income customers, they include all low-income customers as well as deployed military families. Some administer the program themselves, while other donate funds to other social service agencies who are well equipped to determine eligibility and need.

Some cities get their funds by diverting a small amount of each water customer's bill to the assistance fund. Two examples are Portland which takes 1/2% and Eugene takes 1%. If we did that in Salem, it would be about \$0.35 to \$0.70 on average per customer. This is not an added fee, but a portion of their payment diverted to their assistance program.

Currently Salem has been using the funds that are donate. I do not know what that amount is this year, but in the past it was only about \$50,000.

Therefore, ELNA board asks the Council to consider the following actions:

1. Ask the staff to investigate expanding the financial assistance program to all household under the poverty level;
2. Begin collecting necessary data from customers and from social service agencies who deal with providing assistance, to see the extent of the need;
3. Make a donation to the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency that provides support to needy families until other actions can be taken.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.