

Amy Johnson

From: Ashley Stringham <ashleystringham87@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 12:40 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Water Bill Proposed Increase

I am extremely opposed to increasing our water bills yet again when it has been done recently. Our property taxes already increase regularly. I think there must be a mismanagement of funds if this is being proposed, and if that is the case I don't believe I should be responsible for paying more money that will be mismanaged.

Ashley Stringham

Sent from my iPhone

Amy Johnson

From: CAROLYN NORRIS <cnorris1964@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 5:32 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: I oppose the proposed rate increase

My name is Carolyn Norris. I reside at 5939 Summerside Street SE, Salem, OR 97306. I would like to oppose the proposed rate increases for water, wastewater and storm water. The rate increase is not reasonable for Salem citizens to pay during a very financial unstable economy. So many people are not working and those who live on a fixed income are being nicked and dimed constantly. All these supposedly requests for small amounts add up. It is time for the city to look for ways to cut spending while not cutting services.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Norris

Amy Johnson

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of heavenly52@yahoo.com
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2020 3:52 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Contact City Recorder
Attachments: ATT00001.bin

Your Name	Diane M Cooper
Your Email	heavenly52@yahoo.com
Your Phone	5033649680
Street	2530 Mountain View Dr. S.
City	SALEM
State	OR
Zip	97302
Message	<p>This is my written testimony to the City Council in regards to their public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on October 12, 2020. Subject: To increase water rates 3%, wastewater 3 %, and stormwater 5%. I have three main concerns. First, I can barely afford our monthly bill as is, (only living on Social Security) and at this time when we are dealing with the virus, many people have lost their jobs and do not even know if they can continue to live in their homes, or pay any of their monthly bills. I am not sure if any of the people who lost everything in the fires, are currently living in Salem, but for all of us who struggle to pay our bills, I want to ask you, where is your common sense, where is your heart, where is your compassion? How can you even think about increasing our bills at a time like this? I had those same concerns when you wanted to spend money on a new park. My second concern. You want to raise wastewater and stormwater rates, and because of your old and inadequate system, we have been living with constant flooding since we moved into this house on April 15, 2005. Look up my record of how many times I have requested help from the City. The City is having a meeting on October 15th to determine what they can do to correct the problem, but I have already stated to Risk Management and Public Works, what the solution would be. I was told that the replacement of the line down the center of the street, was on the books for 2017, and obviously that was a lie. Why am I even being charged for any wastewater and stormwater service, when I am dealing with constant flooding? We are still living with walls cut out in our lower level since the winter storm of 2012. I should be given a refund for what my husband and I have been paying all these years. Our house was built in 1956, and the flooding issue goes all the way back to when this house was built. I probably would not object to an increase as much, if the City would fix their problem. Which leads into my third concern. Our bill for the City of Salem recently went up, without the public knowing why. I do intend to ask why, but have been constantly working on cleaning up the mess from our September 10, 2019 flood, and now our September 18, 2020 flood. When I hear of the many unnecessary projects that the City works on, I know that if the City would use the money they have, more wisely, they would not need to ask for more money. I know that can be said about many people, but remember, we the people of this City pay your income, and I for one, demand that you stop wasting our money. I absolutely do not want you to increase our monthly bill, especially at this time. Get someone in there, that knows how to manage money. I actually overheard a city worker, that was parked in front of our house, tell a fellow worker, that they needed to stay at our location for another 20 minutes, so that they would get paid their full amount. I have not seen any wisdom in how the City of Salem has handled our case all these years, but I pray that you will decide not to raise our rates, and with the meeting on</p>

October 15th, I pray that the City will finally correct the problem in front of our house. Sincerely, Diane Cooper phone number (503)364-9680

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Amy Johnson

From: Deanna Garcia <dg.boardstuff@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 10:03 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Public comment

Dear Council members,

I am writing to ask that you consider postponing a rate increase for city utilities. I know that many of the public comments have mentioned the pandemic and the 'yet-to-happen' recovery as reasoning. I agree with them, many households in our community have been negatively impacted by Covid-related government mandates. I also want to point out that many households were already experiencing financial difficulties prior to the pandemic. Cost of living continues to sky-rocket while wages barely move, families are left with significant decisions on what to pay for and what to go without.

My community definitely has felt this impact. I live in a working-class community in NE Salem. My home is part of a homeowners association, the monthly dues includes water and sewer costs. For some reason, when the community was developed, all of the homes were put on one main meter. There are 70 homes in the community and our city water bill is the largest portion of our dues. We have approved a budget for 2021 and it already includes a significant increase to accommodate rising cost elsewhere. Another increase could have serious consequences as many of the homeowners in my community are on a fixed income or reeling from the impact of the pandemic. Please consider the members of your community who cannot afford an additional rate increase; table the rate increase until after the economy has shown signs of recovery. Thank you.

Deanna Garcia, President
Hollyridge Estates Homeowners Association

Amy Johnson

From: Dan Lane <laserlane@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 3:40 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: RE estimated increase in water bills for 2021 & 2022

I am a home owner in South Salem. I am retired and also a Veteran. I am having trouble paying our water bill as it is. Several months ago someone added an \$8 charge to our water bill. I have asked why this charge was added but could not get an answer.

Our water bill is one of our top three utility bills we have. if you continue to raise the water rates we will really be hurting financially.

I would ask you to please for go an increase in the water rates.

Dan Lane

Amy Johnson

From: DOUGLAS LUTH <towken@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2020 7:38 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Proposed water, wastewater, and stormwater rate increases

No! No! No!

Enough is enough!
Douglas Luth
4760 20th Ave S
Salem, OR 97302
Ward #7

Amy Johnson

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of dickandchris1011@comcast.net
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2020 6:01 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Comments on proposed water, etc. rate increases
Attachments: ATT00001.bin

Your Name	Rife
Your Email	dickandchris1011@comcast.net
Message	No more water, wastewater, or stormwater rate increases!! COLA does not cover everything! No consideration given, even with proof, that No One is in this house, (most recently noon on 08-04-2020 to 2pm on 08-14-2020). This house is by occupied by elderly, disabled. No one else lives here. And we've Never seen any improvements despite several increases. We have seen new fees. PS: This is the email address provided.

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 10/10/2020.

Amy Johnson

From: Debye Williams <dm-williams@live.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2020 2:40 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Proposed Water Rate Increase

This message is in response to your request for feedback regarding a rate increase. I believe the timing of this request is ill advised. With everything we have been through in this state and in this nation this year, the timing couldn't be worse. So many of the citizens of this state are hurting financially, and those who have been able to contribute to assist those in need in the past will be unable to do so in the near future. I believe this is a request best kept for another time.

Respectfully,

Debra M. Williams

Amy Johnson

From: Frances Holman <franholman@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 7:17 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Proposed Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Increases

Hello City Staff,

My husband and I are low to middle income retirees who "own" our 1978 3 bedroom 2 bath rancher in South Salem.

We'd be happy to pay the stated rate increase for improved water supply related infrastructure. Salem is growing. We need infrastructure repair.

As a first world country we should have the kind of infrastructure folks have in Europe, Canada, Australia, and other Western civilized nations. Poor water systems, bad roads and broken bridges are characteristic of third world countries.

Thank you.

Frances and Harold

Amy Johnson

From: Al Catel <ktrac.2017@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 11:10 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Water rate hike

Dear Councilors and Mayor,

I understand that costs are going up. It makes sense to pay more for water, but coupling this rate hike with the utility fee is making this basic necessity of life affordable for many. I would say allow the rate hike but only if you remove the utility fee/tax.

John and Kathleen Hill

Amy Johnson

From: renojim@juno.com
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 7:59 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: water increases

to the City Recorder and Hopefully the City Counsel:

I am writing in regards to the proposed increase in all water related rates for the city of Salem. It is obserb to me to think of increasing these rates when we have hundreds of people out of work or ill do to the Covid 19 that is going on. I am a senior citizen living on a limited budget and squeking by as it is. If we the people have to cut back during this time, why can't the City do the same. We have to watch every penny we spend but, oh not you, you just say let's increase the tax on this and on that. The new Police building was voted on when things were find with no Virus and most people working. Same with school repairs and work on the city library. Now that the people are down, you want to stick it to them.

If the City of Salem can't live for a short time without a raise in all these services, then maybe it's time to get new managers in that can do the job. I am ashamed of our City managers and the City counsel that they would even consider this kind of an increase during these terrible days. I know I know my voice will go unheard but at lease you can't take that away from me like you want to do with more of my money. Please think of all the people that are out of work and desperate for food when you decide to take more money our of their pockets.

Thank you,

James E Krueger citizen of Salem for 76 years.

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Amy Johnson

From: Hale, Matthew <MatthewHale@corban.edu>
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2020 4:17 PM
To: CityRecorder; Jackie Leung; Chuck Bennett
Subject: Written Testimony

Mayor Bennett, Councilor Leung, and City Recorder,

The following is my written testimony concerning the October 12th Public Hearing concerning City of Salem Proposed Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Rate Increases.

I ask that city leaders make responsible rate increase decisions while all of us continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, now going on 8 months. Rate increases of 3%, 3%, and 5% for water, wastewater, and stormwater respectively for 2021 and 2022 are too high and unreasonable.

The news media (Statesman Journal) recently reported "Rate increases are necessary to keep up with the cost of personnel, materials, and reinvestment in our capital projects," said Peter Fernandez, director of Public Works for the city.

I respectfully ask that you consider the following information when making rate increase decisions:

- A new operating fee of \$8 each month was meant to keep up with personnel costs so why does the City need more rate increases to "keep up with the cost of personnel" according to Peter Fernandez, Director of Public Works? It seems that the City is asking residents to pay twice for personnel costs increases.
- An analysis of my water, wastewater, and stormwater bill over the past 30 months shows an increase of over 37% in total cost, making these basic services unsustainable for many Salem residents over time.
- AARP and the Senior Citizens League estimate a 1.1 percent COLA going into effect in 2021, must less than your proposal to raise rates by 3% and 5%.

Now is not the time to seek huge rate increases, but for a more measured approach that does not harm the residents of Salem and is more in line with actual inflation statistics that impact those on fixed incomes. A more reasonable 1% increase is optimal.

Sincerely,

Matt Hale
Ward 4

Amy Johnson

From: pauleckley@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2020 9:43 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Testimony for October 12th Rate Increase Hearing

Give Us A Break On Rates, Please

The Covid situation will carry far into 2021. With 1,000's of women and men still out of work in Salem and many many businesses either closed or on the brink of closing, Council should consider giving us a break this year on the upcoming rate increase. Most of us live on a fixed income, whether we work or are retired. If working, with the Covid conditions, you may not receive a wage increase this year at all. If retired, you also may not receive a retirement income increase this year or at the best you might receive a 2% cost of living increase. Does Council care about this? I trust they will discuss this thoroughly before making a final decision at the upcoming October 12th meeting.

If you own a home or rent in Salem, or if you own a business, you pay a monthly utility fee to the City. Either directly or through your rent payment. This fee is not only for water or sewer service, but includes stormwater, a franchise fee, a streetlight fee and the brand-new \$96 per year operations fee. The franchise fee is a tricky way of taking money from the water and sewer funds and moving it to general fund. The operations fee also goes to the general fund. The general fund is for police, fire, library, parks, and administrative staff. Don't get me wrong, all these services are needed for a city to properly function.

But normally these services are paid for by taxes or special levies, in our case these are property taxes collected by the county. What our Council has figured out is this. Taxes and levies must be voted on by the public for them to be created or increased (thank goodness!). Not that long ago we voted on and approved a new tax for a much-needed new police building, which is a good thing. But Council also has the authority themselves to create and increase rates, which is the upcoming decision for them. In summary, for taxes and levies, Council can ask and we the voters decide. For rates, Council asks for our opinion, but they decide. There is a big difference.

Because of our current Covid dilemma and continuing economic conditions, Council should consider either not raising rates this upcoming year or at least not raising them the 3% and 5% numbers requested by staff.

Amy Johnson

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of rrandolphburwell@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 9:20 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Contact City Recorder
Attachments: ATT00001.bin

Your Name	Robert Burwell
Your Email	rrandolphburwell@gmail.com
Your Phone	503-580-1973
Street	2665 Mountainview Dr. S.S.
City	Salem
State	OR
Zip	97302
Message	Ask yourselves if this is an appropriate time to increase utility bills for Salem citizens by 8.0 % during these extraordinarily challenging economic times. A rational answer is what you must render. Thank you.

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 10/12/2020.

Amy Johnson

From: Sofie Parra <sofiepar@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 10:22 PM
To: CityRecorder
Cc: Jackie Leung; Chuck Bennett
Subject: Testimony regarding proposed utility rate increases

City Recorder's Office
555 Liberty St SE, Room 205
Salem OR 97301

RE: Water and Sewer Rate Increases public hearing Oct 12, 2020

Dear Salem City Council,

I object to any rate increases at this time and ask that you please reject these proposed increases. I see that the utility has stated that they are being frugal with their capital projects and operating budgets, but I believe they can make do without a rate increase. We are all struggling right now with the fallout of multiple events, including:

- Business closures (some permanent) because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Employees losing work from business closures, quarantines, illness, and stress because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and often without any pay.
- Businesses and individuals having additional expenses to keep themselves safe with extra precautions and purchases of protective equipment.
- Some loss of business due to protests and riots over the summer.
- Business losses and closures due to changes in consumer behavior and concern about safety and well-being due to these recent events.

Please mandate that utilities make do with their current income by making reductions in capital expenditures and their operating budget. Please also make sure their debts are financed at the lowest possible rates; if not, they need to be refinanced.

Many of us have attempted to reduce our water usage and are struggling with the fallout from recent events. Our bill has increased over 30% from 2016 to 2020 even though we are keeping our consumption and sewer usage about the same. I'm sure it's similar for others as most can likely only reduce their usage by so much. You also recently added an \$8 per month fee (tax) earlier this year. These frequent increases average to \$60 increases per year every year just for my small household who uses an average of 1.3 units per person per month. Those who have larger households will be even worse off. We certainly do not have that type of increase in our income over the last few years and I imagine it's the same for the other residents of the city even before recent events. With all these recent increases, now is not the time for more increases, especially for something that everyone needs to live in this city.

The utility has not learned to operate on less and continually asks for more money. I realize that outside governments mandate some projects and the utility does not have a choice on those projects, but they should be put on hold with current events. I also realize that current infrastructure needs to be maintained to avoid expensive emergencies, but those costs need to be closely evaluated to see what's really necessary.

I believe that projects and unnecessary maintenance need to be eliminated until the economy has a chance to recover from recent events. If a project will reduce future maintenance costs or have some other financial benefit, they need to carefully review the breakeven point to decide whether to complete the project and if it can be delayed. I also feel that you must mandate the utility to look for ways to reduce its operating budget. You may want fees and taxes on everything to maintain city services that some people are accustomed to, but that needs to change. You need to stop expensive services and programs, so that utilities that everyone must pay are not spiraling out of affordability.

Please consider my objection to these utility rate increases and the objections of all the other consumers who have written to you or provided oral testimony. Please mandate that the utility go back to the drawing board and look for ways to make do or come up with a proposal that has a smaller rate increase delayed until at least 2022 and is contingent on the economy recovering from the issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please also do the same for all other city departments and agencies.

Thank you,

Sofia Parra
South Salem residential water & sewer consumer

Amy Johnson

From: Wyatt Bartlett <wyatt.bartlett@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 11:58 AM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: water bill

Hello -

Something should be done to prevent the continually increasing charges on our water bill.

The \$8.00 charge that appeared this spring is offensive. I am a retired widow living alone on a fixed income in my home of over 26 years, and I do not feel I should be paying for the rest of the city and all the new California transplants.

AND NOW while we are in a pandemic and an economic depression, you want to increase my bill?! I think you should be ashamed. Maybe in a year's time, but not now.

I have to curb my budget based on my incoming. I think you should do the same. Shake someone else's couch cushions.

Sincerely,
Wyatt Bartlett