



City Council Meeting
Public Comments
October 18, 2023

Board or Commission for Public Comment Sub-Committees

Email amvprado@yahoo.com

Council Meeting Date September 28

Item # Only item

Subject Utilities

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Ana Marie Velasco

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I've been a resident of Escondido since 2000. My husband and I bought a home on today's D2 with 1/2 acre of land, which included many fruit trees.

My husband passed 8 years ago and I'm retired. My water bill doubled 2 months ago. Last bill was \$245. And we did not have a hot summer.

There's thousands of people in this town who have very similar properties in D2 and D 4. We also have a large percent of seniors in our town. We cannot afford the rate increases that are being proposed!!! Between Energy cost and Water, you are forcing us to Pack and leave.

I for one don't want to move. I love Escondido and have invested hundreds of hours supporting my community!

I don't want to start cutting down trees as a possible solution to water rates. We need every single tree, or more, to combat Climate Change. This is a conundrum that cannot be solved just by increasing water at the rate being proposed. Please find solutions that will work for all residents of Escondido.

Thank you.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email georgeannaclark@gmail.com

Council Meeting Date 10/18/2023

Item # Water Rates, Number not yet known

Subject Continued water rate increases

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I work in the Finance Department of a water district where I help calculate rate increases, so I am aware of the SDCWA increases and high inflation that is being factored into this next rate increase. So while I believe the Jan 1 2024 increase is higher than it should be, it is within reason. My main concern is that you are baking in high increases for multiple years without providing a good reason, at least any that is readily available to the public. There are legitimate one time reasons for the one time increase of 8.5% based on the ~12% increase from SDCWA and the ~7% increase to all other costs from inflation. But inflation is decreasing each year, and SDCWA presented this large increase as a way to prevent future large increases. So I fail to understand how you can justify a 9% increase for the next 4 years after the 8.5% increase you are doing this year. For any enterprise fund the goal should be to only pass through the actual costs of water and wastewater. The best way to do this is with annual calculations for rate increases, not by attempting to predict massive increases 5 years ahead of time. Looking at the small section of financials for water and wastewater in the 10/11/23 board packet it looks like you had a healthy net operating income, though it looks like it excludes CIP.

All of this to say, I understand the 1/1/24 increase, but have not been able to find any reasons given to justify the additional 4 years of 9% increases that you are baking into this rate increase. I can't help but view the additional increases as either un-justifiable predictions, or worse they are a sign of poor financial health for the water and wastewater funds. I, and I'm sure other constituents, would like an actual explanation of how you came to the conclusion that you will need to increase rates this dramatically for 5 years when you are already in good financial health. And why you chose to set rates this far in advance rather than on a year to year calculated basis like other districts and cities.

Response to Proposed Changes to Water, Wastewater Rates and Fees Increases in Escondido

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

I'm a homeowner at 732 Chestnut St. and will be greatly affected by the proposed maximum increases to water and wastewater rates. As you know, we're in an era of increasing inflation countered with increasing interest rates. The practical effect of this economic climate is putting an immense amount of strain on family budgets. The City's request to increase water by a maximum 8.5% in 2024 and 9% annual increases through 2027 is far too expensive for most people to absorb. Similarly, the proposed maximum increase of 9% to wastewater rates in 2024 followed by three years of 7% increases is also too high for most families to absorb. These proposed maximum increases will add hundreds of dollars to family budgets in a time when those budgets are already stretched thin. I know the goal of this elected body has been to keep Escondido affordable and to support smart growth for families in all income brackets. I respectfully request that the Mayor and council members consider rates well below the maximum proposed water and sewer rates to help keep Escondido one of the remaining affordable cities in San Diego County.

Sincerely,

Kerri Benecke

Homeowner

732 Chestnut St.