

From: [K Silva](#)
To: [Norvell, Bernie](#); [Morsell-Haye, Jessica](#); [Albin-Smith, Tess](#); [Peters, Lindy](#); [Rafanan, Marcia](#)
Cc: [Lemos, June](#); [Whippy, Isaac](#)
Subject: Public Comment - 17 May 2022 Budget Workshop - 8. Enterprise Funds
Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 7:32:51 AM

Dear Mayor Norvell and Fort Bragg City Councilmembers~

I would like to request that, when discussing the Water and Wastewater Enterprise Funds during the Budget Workshop Discussion, you take the steps to implement more equitable billing and a more transparent statement for your Fort Bragg Water Works customers.

If you take a look at your current Fort Bragg Water Works Statement, can you say how much of your total is fixed charges? No. Can you determine how much less it would be if you cut your water usage in half? No.

The vast majority of utilities create statements that show both the fixed charges and the variable (usage) charges for the billing period as separate items. You could easily answer those questions by looking at their statements. Fort Bragg Water Works doesn't show both the fixed and variable charges on the statements.

It would be more transparent and considerate if Fort Bragg Water Works, instead of combining fixed and variable charges, let customers know exactly what charges are being used to determine the totals of their statements. They should be able to see, with a glance at the statement, how much they are paying before turning on the tap and how much they are paying for water used during that period. Without the fixed and variable charges shown separately, it's difficult for customers to determine why, when they try to conserve water, their bills change so little. The customers deserve to know exactly for what it is they're paying.

Most utilities show gallons in addition to "cons" or, at the very minimum, a note right by the charge defining cons as consumption and 748 gallons = 1 cons unit or something similar. How many Fort Bragg Water Works customers know how much water "cons" represents? They can't find out by looking at their statement.

Most other utilities tie their monthly wastewater variable charges to a "less than" amount: based on either a period in the prior winter or on the water usage for the current month, whichever is less. Fort Bragg Water Works uses a winter average, regardless of less water use after that winter average is determined.

Most people are unaware that customers with the same type of residential accounts using the same amount of water can be charged different amounts. One of my neighbors told me that she and a friend used the same number of cons on their statements yet their statement totals were different and they were confused and upset. That confusion would not have occurred if the statement included an explanation of how the wastewater variable charges are determined. The upset would likely still have occurred as it seems unfair. Fort Bragg has a high percentage of people in the low to low moderate income brackets and every penny counts. You can make your wastewater charges more equitable for your customers by using the "less than" or some other more fair method to determine the variable wastewater charges.

Here is an example: We pay for two "Single Family Residence 5/8 & 3/4" accounts. They are the same class/ meter size and their usage is similar, usually the same frugal use. One account used a total of 23 cons during the past 12 months with total charges of \$1147.65. The other used a total of 24 cons with total charges of \$1048.20. That's right - the account with less water usage was actually charged \$102.34 more in wastewater variable charges. (And \$2.89 less in water charges for a total difference of \$99.45.) Does it seem equitable that two accounts of the same size using almost the same minimal amount of water are being charged a difference of +/- \$100 a year? Using the customary "less than" billing method avoids billing a customer for more than they actually used.

I have three suggestions:

1. Let Fort Bragg Water Works customers know, on the front of the statements, how their wastewater variable charges are being determined, whatever method you use. Work to develop a more equitable method.

2. Define “cons” - using “gallons” in the definition - and print it by the variable water charge on the statement.
3. Include on the statement all four of the charges that make up the total - fixed water, variable water, fixed wastewater, variable wastewater.

I hope you all agree that transparency in billing is important and that you will make these simple changes. Thank you for your consideration.

Kathy Silva

From: [Jacob Patterson](#)
To: [Lemos, June](#)
Cc: [Spaur, David](#); [Whippy, Isaac](#); [sarah mccormick](#)
Subject: Public Comment/Question about Budget Meeting re bond proceeds
Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:48:43 AM

City Council and Staff,

I stopped watching the budget meeting but temporarily watched a 3-2 council majority vote to return the extra \$3.5 Million of the bond funding. I support that decision, although I can see the merits of not returning it too. Regardless, I would like to find out (and you should too) how much of the underwriting and origination expenses incurred by the City is attributable to the \$3.5M being returned. That is, what is the pro rata share of the underwriting and origination expenses already incurred by the City (and thus not recapturable as part of the return of the bond proceeds) did the City spend to issue these bonds only to turn around and return them. I understand that is a "sunk cost" so not really relevant to future decision-making but it would be interesting to know how much money the City has invested in dealing with the fallout from the Mill Site South acquisition falling through. It isn't just the dramatically increased legal expenses (including the questionable funneling of the PR expenses through our law firm's invoices) but also the money we spent on procuring this bond funding that we then just returned because we don't need it to finance the City's land acquisition.

Thanks,

--Jacob