



CITY OF FILLMORE
CENTRAL PARK PLAZA
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Fillmore, California 93015-1907
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The Fillmore City Council held a workshop on August 24 on the proposed increase for water and sewer fees. In our desire to keep the community actively involved and properly informed it was an open microphone session where anyone could come forward and ask any question they may have. We heard from many who wanted to know how much they will have to pay each month for water and sewer services. We also had a lot of questions about the new fee for street sweeping. Most of the comments were concerning the confusion regarding information provided in the Proposition 218 Protest Ballots and questions on what do property owners need to do with the ballots.

WATER: The Council is seeking to increase rates for water service from the average residential base fee of \$25.18 to \$28.20 (a 12% increase) beginning October 15, 2010. Rates will increase on January 1, 2011, an additional 11% or \$3.10 to an average fee of \$31.30. Water fees will go up again on January 1, 2012, to \$34.43 or 10%. On the first day of each following year, the maximum water fee increase will be the change in Consumer Price Index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA (CPI) or, as the Ballot documents call it, "inflation," for the most recent available 12 months, PLUS 2%.

So the question is, "What does that look like to the average residential property owner?" Currently the CPI for the last 12 months is 2%. In the above scenario, the CPI's 2% PLUS the other 2% means a maximum permissible increase of 4% in water rates on January 1, 2013. No doubt it can be confusing.

SEWER: This one works just like water, only the fees will go up on October 1, 2010, from the current \$80.00 to \$82.00. They will increase on the first of July of each following year by the CPI plus NO MORE THAN 5%. Each year the Council will review the sewer fees and if the costs of providing sewer service do not require that the City raise rates by the full 5%, the Council will impose an increase of less than 5%.

It is important to us that citizens know that the rates charged by the City do not generate a profit above and beyond the cost of service. By law, the Water and Sewer "Enterprise Funds" are calculated strictly based on the cost of providing the respective services. The rates are based on the amounts needed to provide service, conduct necessary maintenance and upkeep of the systems, and pay principal and interest on any outstanding debt.

STREET SWEEPING: In the many years past, since street sweeping was required by the State to keep trash and debris out of the storm drains, the City has taken the money from our gas tax payment (that goes into the General Fund) to pay for this service. We've seen a drop in the gas tax and as a result there isn't enough money for the City to continue to pay for this necessary service.

Since its trash and debris, it is covered under rubbish and that falls under the contract the City has with Santa Clara Valley Disposal (Harrison) who pick up our trash each Friday. Street sweeping is currently done every other Monday.

Those who spoke about this service commented that many people didn't move their vehicles out of the way on sweeping day. The Council agrees this is an issue and is asking staff to find a way to solve this problem. It may be with the posting of street signs, imposing fines, or noticing the information on the trash bill or water/sewer bills.

PROTEST BALLOT: I want to thank all who spoke at the Council meeting and for those who made their phone calls and stopped me on the street and in the store to ask about that "blue package" they received.

Those blue pages are the City's notice to the public about the proposed increases in water and sewer fees, and contain your Ballots if you desire to protest the increases. There were two Ballots on the inside of each page, one for the water increase and one for the sewer increase. Each Ballot had the Assessor's Parcel Number (APN), the property owner's name and address and a place for one property owner to sign.

You only send in the Ballot if you oppose the increases. If a simple majority of the property owners return a properly completed Ballot protesting the increases, the City cannot increase the rates for that specific service.

Only property owners were mailed a Ballot. The law does not allow for renters to vote on these types of increases as the water and sewer are services are property related and are the responsibility of the property owner.

At the meeting some commented they were not aware there were Ballots inside the mailer. Some only returned one, not knowing there were two.

If you want another Ballot, they are available at City Hall. They will be purple, not blue. Any property owner can go to City Hall, ask for another Ballot document and fill in the APN, their name and address and sign and return the completed Ballot. If you have already sent in a Ballot, do not do another. If you only did one, turn in both of the purple and your single blue will be destroyed.

All Ballots must be turned in by 6:30 p.m. on September 14, 2010.

If you have any questions, please contact any one of your Council Members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patti Walker".

Patti Walker, Mayor