

28 November 2022

Dear City Council,

Thank you for your time and attention to the following items of note.

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 22-108

Regarding the proposed 14% increase in water utility fees, there are two primary reasons given for this needed increase by the City: an increase in the electric bill for services (\$100,000 in one year) and projected equipment maintenance costs (over \$3 million for the next two years).

- What percent increase is the electrical costs, over the previous year?
- What caused the increase in electrical costs?
- How many more units have been added to the City of Delaware's water utility services over the past year (by total and percent)?
- How much has the revenue increased over the past year (by total and percent)?
- What is the cost-benefit analysis for installing a renewable energy source (e.g. solar array) for the water treatment facility? Are there any grants that could help with such an initiative?
- How do Delaware's fees compare to those in cities of similar size?
- Could the fee increases be absorbed by the income tax increase that will be brought forth by the Financial Review Task Force next month?

2. Increase the tax rate to 2.25%, and consider reallocations of tax dollars. (Impact of this change is to bring in an additional \$6.37M

[Screenshot above from the City's Financial Review Task Force agenda packet 11/2/2022, page 4.]

- Over the past five years, how much money has been allocated in the Capital Improvement Plan for water treatment facility (et al) equipment related costs? (Please provide per annum totals.) What projects did these amounts accomplish?

Equipment costs are capital improvement costs. Capital improvement costs are meant to be covered by income taxes, in the Capital Improvement Plan. There should not be a flat increase in the percentage of the fee to cover these expenses, as that more so impacts families with a lower income.

Clean water is a necessity. It should be easily available to everyone. Is a 14% increase in that cost justified?

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 22-107

Please remove this item from the consent agenda (6-H) and the regular agenda (14). There is no information provided to the public. How is the "Schedule of Fees and Service Charges" changing? Why isn't this information available in the agenda? Who included this item, and why couldn't they provide any contextual information? For those who value government transparency, you cannot count this as a first reading.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these issues as they impact all Delaware residents and taxpayers.

Regards,

Stacy Chaney-Blankenship,

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