

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
621 Woodland Square Loop SE  
Lacey, WA 98503

To whom it may concern,

Summit View Water Works (SVWW) is asking to raise our domestic and irrigation water rates significantly again this year. A letter that was just sent to all SVWW customers provides the reasoning as “experiencing increases in operating expenses”. No information was given on the specifics of those operating expense increases. I would assume that electricity is a major component of their operating expenses. My electrical rates from Benton PUD have not increased so I doubt if SVWW has had an increase in their base rate. I will concede that labor and part costs have likely gone up. I don’t believe those increases warrant an almost doubling of our yearly irrigation bill.

Below is a comparison between SVWW and Badger Mountain Irrigation District (BMID):

Irrigation

|                    | SVWW Current | SVWW Proposed | BMID Posted |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Yearly Connect Fee | \$343.00     | \$514.50      | \$290.00    |
| Cost per Acre      | \$408.24     | \$855.90      | \$230.00    |
| Total For One Acre | \$751.24     | \$1,370.40    | \$520.00    |

Domestic

|                   | SVWW Current | SVWW Proposed | BMID Posted |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Base Rate / Month | \$44.00      | \$51.50       | \$44.50     |
| Usage of 1000 cf  | \$30.00      | \$35.00       | Included    |
| Monthly Total     | \$74.00      | \$86.50       | \$44.50     |

The irrigation charge for one acre from SVWW is currently \$751 and they want to increase it to \$1370. That would be almost 3X what BMID is charging. And for domestic water, the proposed rate increase for SVWW would be almost double BMID’s rate for monthly usage of 1000cf. Both SVWW and BMID service the same general area of SW Kennewick so it is hard for me to believe that their cost structures are considerably different.

Another point I would like to address is the recent expansion of homes serviced by SVWW. Tri City Development Corporation was the owner and developer of this expansion in the SVWW service area.

- Steeplechase: Approximately 85 new 1 acre lots built along Calico Road, Steeplechase Dr, Furlong Lane. Development of these lots began in early 2020.
- Ridge View: Twelve new 1 acre lots built along Ridge View Lane beginning in 2020.
- Summit View Court: Nine new 1 acre lots built along Summit View Court beginning in 2020.

Tri City Development Corporation and Summit View Water Works are both owned by the same officers, Geoffrey Clark and Kirk Rathbun. Did SVWW have to add new resources to service these

new customers and their 1 acre lots with large lawns and landscaping? Did Tri City Development Corporation keep the cost of the lots lower by not including any additional costs needed to add capabilities to the SVWW system? Are existing customers of SVWW now being asked to pay for these new service capabilities? I do not know if my questions are valid, but I hope the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission will investigate.

In addition, SVWW provides irrigation water to the Eagle Butte Vineyard which is also owned by Geoffrey Clark and Kirk Rathbun. Is the vineyard paying the same rate for its irrigation water as the homeowners in the SVWW service area? Are existing SVWW customers subsidizing Eagle Butte's irrigation water usage? Issues I hope WUTC will explore.

I understand that costs have gone up. I am willing to accept reasonable rate increases that can be backed up with detailed information on the underlying costs to maintain our water systems. The fact that SVWW rates are already significantly higher than BMID is very concerning. The proposed exorbitant rate increases do not include any specific information on operating expense increases. That, along with the entanglement of SVWW ownership with Tri City Development Corporation and Eagle Butte Vineyards has me questioning if there is more to this than simply "experiencing increases in operating expenses".

Thank you,

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