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Price gouging by water company

Look closely at your bill from Passaic Valley Water Commission (for the Oct 20, 2014 through Jan 19, 2015 period). Not only did our usage charges rise by 3.3 percent the service fee also rose another 3.5 percent. In the age of the 2 percent cap on municipal budgets, it is outrageous that our water company believes residents have more disposable income than municipalities.

Here is a breakdown of the charges. Our usage charge has risen to \$1.88 per CCF of water used from \$1.82 per CCF. The service charge depends on the size of the pipe you have coming into your residence. Most customers have a 5/8-inch inch pipe

so their service charges each quarter in 2015 is now \$62.97 versus \$60.84 last year. People with a 3/4-inch will pay \$94.44 per quarter (versus \$91.25 last year) and those of us lucky enough (like me) to have a 1-inch pipe will pay a service charge of \$157.41 versus \$152.09 last year. Even if you don't use any water each quarter you are still charged these outrageous service charges.

For example, this quarter my usage charges (there are two charges on each bill since the rate increase was effective Jan. 1 and the bill runs through Jan. 19) totaled \$65.95 and my service charges totaled \$153.15 - or more than 132 percent higher than my usage.

The question is what does Passaic Valley Water Commission do differently to warrant different service charges depending on the size of the pipe you have. So I called PVWC and the answer is nothing. The woman who returned by call said, "while we don't do anything different depending on the size of the pipe customers have it is like an insurance policy so the bigger the pipe you have the more you pay." The bottom line is PVWC cannot justify these outrageous service fees. If customers wanted "an insurance policy" of their water pipe they should be free to shop around (like we do for homeowners and car insurance) to get the best price. This is price gouging at the least.

Several years ago, Governor Christie went after the waste and abuse at Passaic Valley Sewage Commission. It is time the Governor takes a look at Passaic Valley Water Commission. I urge all residents to call Christie at 609-292-6000 and tell him we are sick of these outrageous bills. It is time to clean house at PVWC. Shame on all the commissioners At PVWC who voted for this rate increase.

CLIFTON JOURNAL Mary Sadrakula
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